



Shanmukha

A Cultural Journal



Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar
(1890 - 1967)



G.N. Balasubramaniam
(1910 - 1965)



Mysore Vasudevachar
(1865 - 1961)



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Front Cover : The Grand Masters of Carnatic Music -
(l to r) - Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar, Shri G. N. Balasubramaniam and
Shri Mysore Vasudevachar.

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IN FOCUS

"Music is the last true voice of the human spirit. It can go beyond language, beyond age and beyond colour straight to the mind and heart of all people". Such was the effect of the music of the three doyens of Carnatic music - Shri G. N. Balasubramaniam, Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and Shri Mysore Vasudevachar whose anniversaries happened to fall in May 2015. The Sabha arranged lecture-demonstrations to mark each of these milestones of the great masters. Smt. Nalini Dinesh, Smt. Jayashri Suresh and Smt. Jyothi Mohan have covered these events in Decoding Masters on their Milestones.

In Rama Bhakti Samrajya, Dr. Rudrapatnam N. Tharanathan carries the message of Saint Tyagaraja that the route to salvation is to chant the names of Shri Rama.

Pudukkottai Manpundia Pillai - Legendary Khanjira Player by Mrudanga Vidwan Shri Mannarkoil J. Balaji is the story of a simple man with no musical background who rose to set a great laya tradition.

Smt. Revathi Sadasivam discusses the contributions made to the music field by Shri A. Anantha Krishna Iyer - a torch bearer of Ambi Dikshitar's shishya parampara.

Read what Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan has to say about Devareddy Chinchala of Bengaluru, who though visually impaired is doing a great job by reaching out to those who are blind and helping them lead independent lives through music.

Ms. Ojaswita Krishnaa Chaturvedi describes the portrayal of various nayikas in the Ramayana.

Shri R. Venkat gives an interesting account of the various types of 'Mallaris' played on the nagaswaram in temples in South India in his article 'Music and Temple Rituals'.

The sacrifices made by artistes in the past due to the absence of adequate opportunities to perform and earn enough for sustenance are brought out in Shri 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan's article.

While Shri P. Vasanth Kumar pays a tribute to his veena guru Shri R. Pichumani Iyer, Shri J. A. Jayanth reminisces about his guru and grandfather Flute T. S. Sankaran.

Dance Guru and co-founder of Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir of Mumbai, Smt. G. Karunambal passed away leaving a great void in the hearts of her dear students. Smt. Jyothi Mohan pays a fond tribute to her.

Shri A. Seshan reviews the book, "Revealing the Art of Natyasastra" written by Narayanan Chittoor Namboodiripad.

As usual the Quiz on Sangeeta & Natya keeps you busy figuring out the right answers.

Sabha roundup and Happenings at the Vidyalaya cover some of the events that took place during the quarter.

Decoding Masters on their Milestones

May 2015 happened to mark important milestones with respect to anniversaries of three great personalities of Carnatic music. For vocalist and composer Shri G. N. Balasubramaniam (hereafter referred to as GNB), it was the 50th death anniversary, while for pioneering vocalist Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar it was the 125th birth anniversary. Shri Mysore Vasudevachar, one of the great 20th century composers had his 150th birth anniversary in May 2015. The Sabha had arranged one lecture-demonstration for each of these milestones on the anniversary dates, so it was a bonanza of three lec-dems in the month of May for rasikas.

50th Punyatithi of Shri G. N. Balasubramaniam : Lecture – Demonstration by Shri P. Vasanth Kumar 1st May 2015

Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) Rohit Prasad (Mrudangam), Shri P. Vasanth Kumar (Veena),
Revathi Kumar and Madhumita Aravind (Vocal), Vimarshini Jairam (Violin)

The series got off to a splendid start with senior veena vidwan and music critic Shri P. Vasanth Kumar's lec-dem on 1st May 2015. While, according to his own disclaimer at the outset, he has no recollection of hearing or seeing GNB live, he has had the opportunity to:

- Discuss for many years, the finer aspects of GNB's music and his compositions with disciples of GNB like Thanjavur Shri S. Kalyanaraman, M. L. Vasanthakumari (hereafter referred to as MLV), and Trichur Shri V. Ramachandran as well as his mother, senior musician Smt. Sulochana Pattabhiraman.
- Acquire a good repertoire of GNB's compositions.
- Talk about MLV on Podhigai TV channel's serial programme "Katrinile Varum Geetham" covering aspects of GNB's music as well.

As the programme's compere (who happens to be this writer) stated during the introduction: GNB was a rare artiste, who created a trendsetting individual style that had a whole host of followers not only during his lifetime but also decades after his lifetime, who created compositions of great beauty and who continuously learned and evolved.

Shri Vasanth Kumar used a Powerpoint presentation to make his points and the opening slide featured varnams of GNB. While two of Vasanth Kumar's disciples Revathi Kumar and Madhumita Aravind were present on stage to sing GNB kritis as part of the demonstration, the opening item, a varnam of GNB in Kathanakuthuhalam raga was rendered by Vasanth Kumar on the veena. Some of the other popular varnams listed by him were in ragas Andolika, Ranjani, Hindolam, Varaali and Gavati (janya of Harikambhoji which GNB once heard Bade Gulam Ali Khan render and which inspired him to compose a varnam in it). There was also an Ata tala varnam in raga Yadukulakambhoji. Revathi and Madhumita rendered the Hindolam varnam *Sakala kala* very well. Vasanth Kumar pointed out the usage of Gopuccha and Shrotovaha yatis in the varnam.

About the early days of GNB's musical training, Vasanth Kumar said that GNB was a self-made musician with a formidable intellect and a very unique voice. He is said to have absorbed some finer points of music from his father Shri Narayanaswamy Iyer and some compositions from Vidwan Shri Madurai Subramania Iyer. His manasika guru was Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar whom he idolised to the extent that he wouldn't tolerate any criticism of him. Interestingly, he has played the tanpura for some of Ariyakudi's concerts.

The vocal renditions were planned on the lines of a regular kutcheri to make the demonstration more lively and absorbing and as this writer interprets it, it was certainly befitting the regard that GNB had for Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar and his adherence to the concert pattern set by the latter; and so following the varnam, the duo sang a kriti on Ganesha *Karimukha varada* in Nattai with excellent kalpana swaras and a kriti on Goddess Saraswati *Saraschandra Nibhanane* in Veenadhari. Veenadhari is a rare raga which is a janya of Chakravakam with arohanam SRGPDNS and avarohanam SNDPMGRS. The raga mudra has been used in this kriti as it has been in many of GNB's other kritis. GNB's other kriti on Ganesha and Saraswati respectively are *Varavallabha Ramana* in Hamsadhvani and *Saraswati Namostute* in raga Saraswati which are quite popular on the concert platform.

Interestingly, he has composed a kriti on Saint Tyagaraja, *Manavakula* in Hindolam raga, Mishra Jhampata.

Most of GNB's kritis are on his ishta devata Raja Rajeshwari. On Krishna, he has composed *Mohanakrishna* in Katanakuthalam. GNB has composed 2 kritis on his family deity Dharma Shasta of Aanatandavapuram near Mayavaram, *Bhuvanathraya Sammohana* in Mohanam and *Mama Kuleshwaram* in Todi set to 2-kalai Roopaka talam. In the Todi kriti, he has followed Muthuswamy Dikshitar's style in terms of tala (among the Trinity, whose kritis were predominant during GNB's time, only Dikshitar has used 2-kalai Roopaka talam) and depth of detail in describing the deity. According to the Puranas, Shasta had two consorts Purna and Pushkala who were also called Navayouvanamba and Sundaramba and they find mention in *Mama Kuleshwaram*. This masterpiece of GNB has been handled by artistes from all schools like Shri K. V. Narayanaswamy (Ariyakudi school) and Shri P. S. Narayanaswamy (Semmangudi school). Other GNB kritis that Shri P. S. Narayanaswamy would often sing were *Parama Kripa Sagari* in Yadukulakambhoji and *Ranjani Niranjani* in Ranjani raga. Smt Seetha Rajan often sings *Kamalacharane* (Amritabehag) and his Andolika varnam, while Smt Radha Namboodiri has *Santhatham* (Valaji) in her repertoire.

It was then time to listen to a recording of the master himself. Vasanth Kumar played a recording of GNB's Madhyamavati alapana followed by his rendition of *Palinchi Kamakshi* with neraval and kalpana swaras at "Kantamagu". In this recording GNB was accompanied by Kumbakonam Rajamanickam Pillai on the violin and Pazhani Subramania Pillai on the mridangam. Vasanth Kumar pointed out the clarity of voice and sangatis, speed, maintenance of kalapramanam, the wide variety of kalpana swara endings and raga alapana duration being proportionate to the size of the kriti in GNB's singing.

The focus then shifted to the ragas created by GNB namely:

Shivashakti - janya of Kharaharapriya with arohanam-avarohanam SGMDS SNDMGS - kriti composed by GNB: *Shreechakrara Nilaye* and *Vinuta Paalini*.

Amritabehag - janya of Kalyani with arohanam-avarohanam SMGPND SNDMGS - kriti composed by GNB: *Kamalacharane* which has a lovely chittaswaram.

Vasanth Kumar rendered *Kamala charane* on the veena. This kriti is the only one in which GNB has used a signature for himself namely, Vimarshananda. This name was given to him by Tediur Subramanya Shastri after initiating GNB into Srividya upasana. Revati sang an excellent alapana of Shivashakti with a competent response by Vimarshini on the violin. The kriti rendered was *Shrichakrara nilaye*.

Some rare ragas handled by GNB in composition are:

1. Chayaranjani - janya of Shubha Pantuvarali - SGMPNS SNDPMGS - kriti composed by GNB is *Nee valayinche* - this has been sung by MLV in a commercial recording with a nice chittaswaram,
2. Sama kadambari (Shankarabhanam) - kriti composed by GNB is *Manasu raada*
3. Chandrahasitam (Harikamboji without Panchamam) - kriti composed by GNB is *Enta Ninnu*,

Vasanth Kumar noted that many of the janyas that result from panchama varjyam of non-vivaadi melakartas already had names in ancient times and also songs composed in them e.g. Shekharachandrika (Shubha Pantuvarali), Shriranjani (Kharaharapriya), Hamsavinodini (Shankarabhanam), Bhavani (Bhavapriya), Kuvalayabharanam (Vakulabharanam) all result from removing panchamam from the melakartas listed in brackets. *Ayyane un azhagai* is an excellent kriti of Vedanayagam Pillai in Shekharachandrika which has been rendered by MLV with an elaborate alapana. He opined that it is unacceptable to give new names to these old ragas, as some people are doing, without duly checking old treatises and books.

A singular contribution that GNB made to music was his successful adoption of shruti bhedom, while his father Shri Narayanaswami Iyer disapproved of it. It was later successfully employed by his disciples too and is now quite common on the concert platform. It is interesting to learn how it became an acceptable practice; Madurai Mani Iyer in his Presidential address in the Music Academy (in the year that he was awarded the Sangeeta Kalanidhi title) opined that shruti' bhedom is not acceptable. Later GNB argued his case in the Experts Committee that the Trinity have certainly used shruti bhedom. As an example he cited Tyagaraja's Bhairavam kriti *Mariyada Gadayya* in which the charanam has the sahitya "Tanavarulanyulane taaratamyamunu ghanudaina Daasharathike galadani keerti gadaa"; the dhaatu of this line when sung by transposing madhyamam as shadjam and tarasthayi shadjam as panchamam sounds like Yamuna Kalyani and the meaning is "Among the exalted Gods, only you have the reputation of discriminating between those that belong to you and those who do not really". What a discerning musician was Tyagaraja that he tuned this line in such a way that shruti bhedom results in a raga which is something other than Bhairavam just like the sahitya refers to people who are other than Rama Bhaktas! Consequently, a resolution was passed in the Experts Committee that shruti bhedom can be permitted.

The vocal duo rendered *Mangala vara dayaki*, another of GNB's compositions in the peppy Kathanakuthuhalam.

It is surprising that GNB didn't set much store by vivaadi ragas. The few he sang were Nattai (*Swaminatha paripalaya*), Veera vasantham (*Emani pogaduthura*), Jyotiswaroopini (*Ganamudhapanam*), Ganamoorthi (*Ganamoorthi*) and *Ne Pogadakunte* (Varaali). According to MLV, GNB had said that he has studied many vivaadi ragas but he does not experience the sowkhyam that he experiences with rakti ragas; he has said further that one should stop with singing kritis in these ragas without resorting to manodharma.

An interesting aspect of GNB not singing much of Varaali also is that musicians in those days played to their strengths - GNB very well knew that Varaali being a more karvai-oriented raga would not sit well in his "ravai saareeram". Anecdotes abound about other musicians too in this respect - MS would always decline to sing Purandaradasa kritis when requested by her audiences in Karnataka saying it was "Vasanthi's soththu" namely MLV's wealth, while MLV would decline to sing MS specials like *Bhavayami Gopalabalam* in Andhra.

Talking about disciples of GNB, in the case of the inimitable MLV, it was a rare phenomenon of the Guru finding the shishya; GNB took her under his wing and groomed her into a successful musician. Her guru bhakti and involvement in his kritis were obvious to people who moved closely with her. Talking of similarities between MLV and GNB; both were sincere, aware of their own faults, they were their own critics, they were sensitive to, though not resentful of criticism by others, they did not run down any of their contemporaries, they encouraged accompanists and disciples without reservations, both were easily exploited, both made money and let it slip through their fingers.

One contrast between them was that GNB was usually jittery before concerts while MLV was anything but that! MLV opined that it is not necessary that one has to sit with tanpura and sing everyday for hours (once one reaches a certain stage of maturity). But, some musical thought should always be running through the mind, for instance, can this kriti be sung differently, can that korvai be sung, is this kalaparamanam right, can that raga be sung, can this pallavi be set differently, can I learn that kriti etc. Indeed a useful insight to students and budding musicians in the audience.

Vasanth Kumar then performed an interesting exercise of playing alapanas of the same raga by the guru and two of his shishyas -he played Kalyani alapana by GNB, MLV and Tanjavur Kalyanaraman. He pointed out the common phrases used by the three of them and stated that though the basic style of the disciples was that of their guru's, the shishyas also had evolved an individual style. For instance, MLV made her general kalapramanam a little slower than GNB. Unlike his guru, Tanjavur S. Kalyanaraman is known to have revelled in rendering vivaadi ragas and with great success too. GNB disapproved of raga phrases being used in kalpana swaras and all his disciples faithfully eschewed them too.

The main item of the vocal presentation was a beautiful composition in Keeravani *Nee charanaambujamunu*. The alapana was by Madhumita while both of them sang the kriti, neraval and kalpana swaras which were absolutely brilliant.

Though GNB has not composed many "tukkadas" he has tuned a number of compositions which became very popular like *Sonnathai Seidida*, *Kannanai Kanbadeppo*, *Dikku theriyada kattil*, *Aarumo Aaval* etc.

The concert ended with a ragamalika *Kannanai Kanbadeppo* (Hamsanandi, Natakkuranji, Shuddha Dhanyasi, Abhogi) composed by GNB's friend Kannan Iyengar and tuned by GNB. GNB is known to have started composing a tillana in Hamsanandi but did not complete it. Calcutta K. S. Krishnamurti completed it.

It was a very well-researched, well-planned and well-executed lec-dem by the guru and the disciples made it a resounding success with their outstanding singing. Indeed an evening well-spent and enlightening. Vimarshini Jairam and Rohit Prasad provided good support on the violin and mrudangam respectively. It must be mentioned that GNB's youngest daughter Smt Prema Balan was also present in the audience for the lec-dem.



◀ Shri G. N. Balasubramaniam

"Vasanthi typifies real discipleship - she applies her mind to all that she absorbs and presents a glorious edifice of her own creation".



◀ Smt. M. L. Vasanthakumari

"GNB's teaching methodology was unique and rewarding. He taught me maths, physics, geography and history through music. He taught me placement of swaras, measurement of gamakas, geographical distribution of places and history of music."

125th birth anniversary celebration of Shri Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar : Lecture Demonstration by Shri Alepey Venkatesan 16th May 2015

Jayashri Suresh

The Shanmukhananda Sabha celebrated the 125th birth anniversary of Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar with a lecture demonstration by his direct as well as the last disciple, Shri Alepey Venkatesan. He was accompanied by Karaikkal Shri S. Venkatasubramaniam, a talented violinist as well as composer



(l to r) Sriram Subbaraman (Mrudangam), Vaishnavi Anand (Vocal Support), Sri Alepey Venkatesan (Vocal), Karaikkal S. Venkatasubramaniam (Violin)

who has been groomed by Sangeetha Kalanidhi, Padma Bhushan, Prof T. N. Krishnan and on the mrudangam by Shri Sriram Subbaraman, a senior scholarship awardee who underwent master classes from Sangeeta Kalanidhi, Palghat Shri Raghu. The vocal support was rendered by his grand -niece as well as disciple, Smt Vaishnavi Anand who had come all the way from Singapore for this program!

Shri Venkatesan began by saying how his Guru has had a long and wonderful association with the Sabha and had performed historic concerts at this venue. Ariyakudi was hailed as a "Margadarshi of Margadarshis" and was respected as a musician of the 20th century whose formula for rendering a perfect kutcheri is adhered to even today. He was an inspiring role model and was considered as a "Sangeetha Dharma Paripalaka" by Shri G. N. Balasubramaniam. Shri Semmangudi Sreenivasa Iyer revered him as his "Manasika Guru" and when the doyen was asked what he would like to do if he had to live his life all over again, he replied that he would like to sing like Ariyakudi!!

Venkatesan then went on to explain how the concerts of yore were long and tedious with long and arduous raga alapanas which only the very erudite and determined could appreciate and where only 4 or 5 oft repeated pieces were sung which led to boredom. He then threw light on Ariyakudi's role in changing this scenario and the maestro's myriad abilities as follows:-

Ariyakudi drastically reduced the duration of the raga alapanas and because he was blessed with a facile voice and fecund imagination, he could render a raga alapana in five or six minutes giving a complete picture of the raga. He possessed the strength of personality to urge the violinist to perform within a certain time frame.

He devised a sense of proportion for raga, neraval and kalpana swarams. Due to this, a large chunk of time got freed up and as a result more varieties of compositions were introduced. The most impactful results due to this were that :

- * Boredom was banished from concerts and
- * Many priceless compositions of the Trinity were preserved.

The whole crux of Shri.Venkatesan's presentation was on what made Ariyakudi such a universally acknowledged leader in music. He elucidated these points as follows:-

- **Raga Alapana** - His music was a compendium of various features and an excellent chaste and uncompromising adherence to classicism built on a solid flawless foundation.

As a result, he never played to the gallery and raised the standard of appreciation of his audience.

He sang the distilled essence of the raga swarupa which was enshrined in the compositions of the Trinity and his manodharma was traditional and pristine. eg. such was his veneration for Tyagaraja that he never touched the 'daivatam' in the Sriragam varnam as it was not there in the Sriragam Pancharatna, *Entaro Mahanubhavulu*.

Venkatesan sang the Sri raga varnam to illustrate this.

- **Rich Repertoire-** He had a rich repertoire thanks to his gurus, Shri Malaiyappa Iyer and Shri Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar and he added tremendous variety to it during the course of his musical career. Due to this, there was something for everyone in his concerts and he was able to cater to a whole range of musical tastes. So a boring or failed Ariyakudi concert was an oxymoron!!
- **Voice culture-** He adopted a technique where the voice remained musical in all conditions and the adaptability was tremendous. So there was neither shouting or mumbling but a full throated ease where everything was in balance and there was perfection in delivery. He had a lovely voice and could hit the tara sthaya panchama even in his 70s. He also emphasised on the optimal enunciation of lyrics where the pronunciation is distinct as well as musical-in short, what he termed as 'satvik'.
- **Central Importance of Madhyamakala in concerts-** He felt that too much chouka had a dragging effect and druta robbed the concert of a sense of repose and though he possessed the ability to render in both chouka kala as well as druta kala, he chose the madhyamakala as his main mode of delivery.
- **Primacy of gamakas-** He believed that gamakas were the very soul of Carnatic music but never overdid it. He adopted the 'Golden Mean' and would render gamakas not for the sake of gamakas but in such a way that the soul of the raga was revealed. Eg. For certain ragas, if you don't sing certain plain notes, it robs the raga of its majesty. The 'gandharam' in Purvikalyani is solid and gives 'gaambheeryam' to the raga.

Venkatesan sang a Purvikalyani raga sketch to illustrate this point and sang *Ninnuvina*. This kriti was rendered in Chatusra Eka talam in Misra nadai and he sang kalpana swarams with a lot of delicacy and grace avoiding harshness.

- **Grand role of laya -** He envisioned laya to be beyond just clever arithmetic and had the vision to understand that it is the very bedrock of Carnatic music. He had great felicity with very slow as well as super fast speed. He analysed and understood the effects that kala pramanam had on raga aesthetics. He experimented with a kala pramanam that was somewhere between chauka and madhyamakala rendering. He would not unnecessarily slow down a kriti but if certain conditions were met, he would experiment by slowing down thus providing scope for a rich exploration of gamakas. He could therefore compose scholarly pallavis as he had an excellent understanding and command over the intricacies of laya.

Venkatesan sang *Ninnuvina sukhamu gaana* in Todi ragam with a brief raga alapana and kalpana swarams at "*Rupamu Pratapamu*" as well as *Hecharika* in Yadukula Kambhoji set to Misra Jhampa talam with neraval and brilliant kalpana swarams at "*Ninnujoota*".

- **Ability to gauge the expectation of the audience -** He knew the perfect formula to keep his audience engaged throughout the concert. He knew what his listeners wanted and proceeded to provide that with class and conviction.
- **Fine art of making the difficult seem deceptively simple -** His concerts would on the surface look easy and smooth and full of finesse but there was gruelling detail, thought and flawless execution behind it. His accompanying artistes like Shri Palaghat Mani Iyer and Shri Umayalpuram Shivaraman as well as Shri T. N. Krishnan would often say that his kalapramanam was so tricky that only they would know the concentration and rigour that it demanded. Since there was no interval between songs, the tempo was maintained and this demanded great skill, stamina and dexterity from his accompanying artistes.

Venkatesan specifically threw the spotlight on 'TODI' and how Ariyakudi's name is almost synonymous with that ragam. He outlined how the maestro could embellish even the minutest of phrases in Todi with scintillating gamakas and how rarified heights were reached with Ariyakudi's rendition of *Amba Nannu Brova*. He spoke about the role of the oscillated gandhara in forming the essence of that ragam. He mentioned how Ariyakudi knew almost 90 kritis in Todi. So much so that Ariyakudi's Todi became THE TODI. Venkatesan recounted how Ariyakudi's tapas and essence was

distilled in the *Amba Nannu Brova* which he sang for the first time in Shanmukhananda in 4 kalai deshadi with Mani Iyer playing beautifully and how it became a magnum opus which brought the roof down. He made a sincere appeal to all artistes to preserve Ariyakudi's way of singing Todi which today was getting endangered!

Venkatesan sang the very famous composition of Ariyakudi, a ragamalika pallavi *Shankarabharanani Azhaitodi vaadi Kalyani Darbarukku* set to 2 kalai Adi talam. He sang neraval for each portion in the four ragams but the piece de resistance was the scintillating kalpana swarams which were sung in all the 4 ragams alternately even in the koraippu which added a lot of excitement and was a live lesson for the listeners. This was followed by a crisp and well executed tani avartanam by Sriram Subbaraman.

Venkatesan spoke about the extraordinary tunesmith that Ariyakudi was. The quintessence of his tapas was seen in the way he notated the Tiruppavai and Ramanatakam. The Saveri Tiruppavai in Misra chapu is akin to having the essence or the distilled juice of Saveri, so outstanding was his ability. Even today, the Tiruppavai as he notated is sung in every home.

T. S. Balakrishna Shastrigal has written a eulogy in 8 shlokas about Ariyakudi, such was his impact!!

Venkatesan dwelled on how Ariyakudi was responsible for many innovations. The innovation of streamlining the kutcheri format thereby adding one hour of miscellany to it brought more and more listeners to this great art form as it added great ranjakatva to the concerts. He has actually educated two generations of listeners by elevating their knowledge and standard of appreciation.

It is no surprise then that Ariyakudi was this colossal superstar who strode the carnatic music firmament so much so that Palaghat Mani Iyer said, "Sangeetam means Sriman Ariyakudi Ramanuja Iyengar"

Venkatesan then proceeded to sing the Tiruppavai, *Oruththi maganai Pirandhu* in Bihag, a song *Ramanai tharuvai Jagathrakshaka* in Sindhubhairavi from Ramanatakam and a tillana composed by Ariyakudi in Kanada ragam set to Tisra nadai Adi talam and concluded with the Ariyakudi composed mangalam, *Shri Ramanukku jaya manglam*.

Shri Venkatesan spoke with ease and felicity with great command over English which made the presentation very interesting and all those present were offered a glimpse into the genius that was Ariyakudi.

The lec-dem was compered by the writer who in her introductory remarks said how Ariyakudi commands the status of a superstar akin to that Amitabh Bachchan enjoys in Bollywood and just like the way everything about a superstar was emulated, the charismatic and talented Ariyakudi too enjoyed the same level of hero worship and was idolised by musicians who were themselves jambavans!!

150th birth anniversary of Shri Mysore Vasudevachar :

Lecture demonstration by Smt. Jaya Krishnan and rendering of rare kritis of Vasudevachar by Dr. Prema Rangarajan 30th May 2015

Jyothi Mohan

The evening began with the illustrated talk by Smt. Jaya Krishnan, a veteran musician who is an 'A' Grade artiste of AIR. She had the privilege of learning a few kritis directly from the composer as well as from his disciples Smt. Mani Krishnaswamy and Shri T.K. Ramaswami Iyengar.

After a brief introduction on Mysore Vasudevachar, Smt. Jaya Krishnan and her disciple Shri A. K. Mahesh began the concert with a varnam in Mandari, *Vanajakshi nine kori*, set to Adi talam. True to his Vaishnava heritage most of his compositions are in praise of Rama and Krishna. Some of his 200 compositions are also in praise of other deities. As he was an ardent admirer of the Trinity, he has composed kritis in praise of Tyagaraja, Muthuswamy Dikshitar and Syama Sastri as well. He has composed in all major ragas and also in lesser known lighter ragas like Megharanjani,



(l to r) Aditya Rajagopalan (Mrudangam), Shri A.K.Mahesh and Smt. Jaya Krishnan (Vocal), R.Madhavan (Violin)

Sunadavinodini among others. *Shri Harivallabhe* on Goddess Lakshmi in raga Suddha Dhanyasi in Sanskrit was sung next. He was inspired by his Guru Patnam Subramanya Iyer's *Raghuvamsa sudha* and composed a varnam in Kathanakuthuhalam which elicited great appreciation from his Guru. As the anecdote goes, Mysore Vasudevachar was sent to Tiruvaiyaru by Maharaja Krishnaraja Wodeyar of Mysore to study under Patnam Subramania Iyer who had agreed to teach him if he came to his village. Not knowing Tamil, he unwittingly knocked at the door of Maha Vaidyanatha Sivan, his arch rival, to ask for directions and was told that he lives in the opposite house! After a neat alapana of Mohanam, she took up *Rara Rajeevalochana Rama* mainly to highlight the beautifully structured chittaswaram. They sang *Mahatmule* in Rishabhapriya set to Adi Talam after a crisp alapana, to showcase the beautiful chittaswaram. She touched upon the beauty of the chittaswaram of *Brochevarevarura* in Khamas. Mysore Vasudevachar established the bhashanga status in Khamas by introducing kakali nishadam as an anya swaram. She narrated how Vasudevachar reacted when his simple composition was presented like a bedecked bride with much embellishment by both M. S. Subbulakshmi and Maharajapuram Vishwanatha Iyer. His compositions in Telugu have a sweet lilt while his Sanskrit compositions reflect his mastery over the language. The compositions are replete with bhakti and raga bhava. After a brief evocative alapana of Poorvikalyani, they sang *Marachitivemo*. She explained that this kriti lends itself to neraval singing as each sentence is complete and suitable for elaboration. She sang kalpana swarams and Aditya Rajagopal on the mridangam played a short tani. They sang his famous tillana in Natabhairavi with the sahitya in praise of Smt. Rukmini Devi Arundale, a favourite with all those who have learnt at Kalakshetra. On the invitation of Rukmini Devi, Vasudevachar joined Kalakshetra as the principal and tuned Valmiki Ramayana for their dance dramas. Hearing the divine music Rajaji is known to have commented that between them, Rukmini Devi and Mysore Vasudevachar have created a peerless temple for Rama. Vasudevachar had composed the music for only the first four kandas and it was left to his grandson Shri S. Rajaram to finish the work. His compositions were compared to crystal sugar candy as they are simple and sweet. She also gave credit to late Shri N. R. Bhuvanarajan, eminent music critic who was instrumental in getting notation of 100 compositions of Mysore Vasudevachar published in "Swadeshi Mitran".

Smt. Jaya Krishnan rounded off her presentation with two compositions, *Gokula Nilaya* in Abheri, and *Janaki Manoharam* in Mand, both in Adi Talam.

Dr. Prema Rangarajan along with her disciple Smt. Kalpalathika Ravishankar presented some rare kritis of Mysore Vasudevachar. Dr. Prema Rangarajan, an 'A' Grade artiste of AIR has a PhD from Madras University. They began with *Pranamatha Sri Mahaganapathy* in Kanada set to Adi Talam in slow tempo. Vasudevachar has composed on various rarely-heard names of Vishnu. One such kriti, *Samkarshana maam paalaya*, was rendered by them in raga Abhogi in Rupaka talam. A beautiful composition wherein he has laid emphasis on the rishabhham, was the Sahana kriti *Taramagaadura* in Chatusra triputa set in tisra nadai. This was followed by a rendering in Natakapriya, by Kalpalathika. The kriti was *Idisamayamu brova rada* in Rupaka tala. Vasudevachar has composed eight kritis on Mahalakshmi. They sang *Devi Rame* in Vasantha set to Adi Talam. This composition is on Vidyalakshmi where he says Lakshmi and Saraswathi are the same. An elaborate Latangi alapana by



(l to r) Aditya Rajagopalan (Mrudangam), Smt. Kalpalathika Ravishankar and Dr. Prema Rangarajan (Vocal), R. Madhavan (Violin)

Kalpalathika followed by a beautiful crisp raga sketch by Shri Madhavan on the violin led to the kriti *Enta Nirdaya*, which following his Guru Patnam Subramanya Iyer, was 1½ edam in Adi Talam. Neraval was taken up at *Varijasanadi vinuta pada* followed by kalpana swarams. The deep influence of all the stalwarts of the Thanjavur- Cauveri delta can be seen in this kriti. The Todi kriti, *Neramemi naapai neerajaksha Rama* in Adi tala one kalai seemed similar to *O Rangasayi, Darini telusukonti* etc. of Tyagaraja in the number of gradually built up sangatis in the pallavi. Rich ragabhava-laden kriti *Marimari vacchunaa* in Kambhoji in Adi two kalai, revealed his mastery over composing chouka kala kritis. *Kailasapathe*, in Kalyani was along the lines of Dikshitar kritis. *Pranatharthihara* in Chenchurutti set to Khanda jati tripata tala, revealed eduppu after 6 counts from samam, in two kalai choukam. The kriti has a chittaswara and madhyamakala sahityam.

A lively, rare tillana in Sudha Salavi which is a janya of Natabhairavi, brought to an end, an illuminating evening by both artistes who demonstrated the rich variety in compositions of Mysore Vasudevachar. Both artistes were ably supported on the violin by Shri R. Madhavan and on the mrudangam by Shri Aditya Rajagopalan.

The programme was compered by the writer who gave a brief introduction about Mysore Vasudevachar while introducing the artistes.

One more great composer Papanasam Sivan's 125th birth anniversary falls on 26th September 2015 and to commemorate this anniversary, a lecture-demonstration by Dr. Nirmala Sundararajan and Dr. Subhashini Parthasarathy has been scheduled on the same day.

AWARDED



Shanmukha was awarded a Certificate of Merit for being selected in the top 100 meritorious in-house magazines by the ICE Awards 2015, which promotes internal communication.

Rama Bhakti Samrajya

Dr. Rudrapatnam N. Tharanathan



← Saint Tyagaraja

Rama Bhakti Samrajya was the message by Shri Tyagaraja to all mortals of this mundane world. In the Carnatic classical music scenario who has not listened to this immortal kriti of Tyagaraja in Shuddhabangala, wherein he proclaims that those great souls who are blessed with the divine bliss of Rama Bhakti alone are conferred supreme Brahmananda, which is beyond description and which can be reached only by self-realization.

In fact in this and almost in all the kritis, Tyagaraja outpours on the noble qualities/gestures of Rama, par-excellence Sarvabhowma of Raghukula. Each one of his kritis is replete with multiple forms of Bhakti rasa sweetened with Bhava (like honey), and filled with aesthetic beauty, and depicting Rama's personality right from childhood to finally Rama Samrajya Pattabhishekha. To Tyagaraja, Rama was everything in life. Rama was his *Ishta Devata*, his *Guru* (Teacher), his mentor, his friend and even his foe (as seen in some of his Ninda stuti kritis).

He never felt lonely. Chanting Rama Tarakamantra 96 crores times he visualized Rama and became one with Him. In the kriti *Ela Nidayaradu* in Athana Tyagaraja confesses that Rama took an incarnation on earth just to get focussed on by him through his compositions. In the Madhyamavati kriti *Ramakatha Sudharasa Panamu Oka Rajyamu Jesune* he concludes that drinking the ambrosial nectar of Rama's story would confer on one a veritable kingdom. Putting on the appropriate garb with body in one place and mind elsewhere, those who cheat the public do they ever get the Lord's grace ? (as in the kriti *Kanugonu Soukyamu Kamalajukaina Galguna* in Nayaki).

Tyagaraja saw no distinction among the Trinity, Shiva, Madhava and Brahma (*Shivudano*, *Madhavudano*, *Kamalabhavadano* - - ?). For him all the three Gods were one and the same. In fact the great Rama Tarakamantra was derived by a divine combination of two Bijaksharas, namely *Ma* from Shiva Panchakshari Stotram – *Om Namaha Shivaya*; and *Ra* from Narayana mantra - *Om Namo Narayanaya*, as explained in the Devaamrutavarshini kriti *Evarani Nirnayinchirira*. In the beautiful Athana kriti – *Mummurtulu Gumigudi*, he goes to the extent of declaring that the power of Rama outweighs the sum total power of Trimurtis put together, much to the surprise of everybody, which confused the Trimurtis as to how a "Naramanava", the son of king Dasharatha, could possess all those high superlative attributes ? In the Sahana kriti *Raghupate Rama Rakshasa Bhima* Tyagaraja says that Rama is iconic for Raghukula (Raghu dynasty) just like Bhima for Rakshasas (demons/dare devils).

As an advice, in the kriti *Telisi Ramachintanato Naamamu* (Purnachandrika) Tyagaraja cautions everybody to chant Rama mantra with perfect understanding and thought, for the word Rama signifies both the name of a woman (if uttered keeping lust and worldly passions in mind) and also *Parabrahma*, who upon constant/continuous dwelling liberates the soul, thus leading to *Jivanmukthi*. Continuing, he says the word *Arka* denotes both the poisonous tree as well as the full bright Sun, which evades darkness of mind; similarly the word *Aja*, meaning a goat or Brahma, thinking of whom blesses one with success and victory.

That Tyagaraja had reposed implicit faith in the lotus feet of Rama is evident in a number of kritis focussing on *Paadasevana* (adoration of lotus feet). In the Amrutavahini kriti *Sri Rama Padama Nirupa Jaalune*, the rebirth of Ahalya from her cursed stone form just at the touch of Rama's feet is narrated. In the Ramapriya kriti *Sandehamunu Dirpamayya* he pleads with Rama to clear his doubt as to whether his holy feet or the elegant sandals are great ? While the great sages who worshipped

Rama's feet secured Vaikuntha (His holy abode), Bharatha who worshipped His sandals got Rama Himself. To relieve Sugriva's anxiety about Rama's inclination to fight against Vaali, Rama kicked off with ease the huge carcass of Dundubhi, as portrayed in the Begada kriti *Ni Padapankajamulane Neranamminanu*.

In the Revagupti kriti *Grahabalamemi Sri Ramanugraha Balame Balamu*, Tyagaraja extols the Himalayan strength of Ramanugraha overpowering the strength of all the nine planets put together. Lyrically this kriti is outstanding in the sense the word *graha* is repeatedly used in a beautiful manner, namely, *Grahabalamemi Sri Ramanugraha* ; *Grahabalamemi Tejomaya Vigramunu* ; *Grahapidala* ; *Panchapapamulaanugraha* ; *Nigrahamu*. Tyagaraja's deep devotion to Hari had the power of eradicating the virulent inner enemies, such as kama, the five great sins and the evil effects of all the nine planets.

Yet, in the Dhenuka kriti *Teliyaleru Rama Bhaktimargamunu*, Tyagaraja very emphatically asserts that those persons just by putting the guise of worthy men covering the body with all the paraphernalia and to win over the people with the sole purpose of earning money/wealth/fame, can never know the path of devotion.

In the Saalagabhairavi kriti *Padavini Sadbhaktiyu Galgute*, Tyagaraja goes on to say that one attains a status worthy of appreciation only when one has true devotion to Rama. He categorically disagrees, even condemns and questions the vicious acts/crimes, such as posing as learned/great, just by associating with kings as friends, conducting yagas with desire and avarice, etc. and yet remain ignorant of the divine character of Rama. Sarcastically Tyagaraja describes the various deceitful ways of men in this world – without knowing the power of Sri Rama mantra, they speak as if it is an ordinary thing, being slaves to lust, desire, money and with a mind devoid of bhakti and compassion, they go all around with the hope of becoming rich and great, as narrated in the kriti *Emandune Vichitramunu* in Sahana.

Parallely, Purandaradasa in one of his Devarnamas *Ramamantrava Japiso Hey Manuja* in Jonpuri, proclaims that one should not get carried away by chanting/believing in various other mantras (*Aa Mantra Yi Mantra Nechhi Nikedabeda*), instead one should just put all one's belief in Rama mantra and get relieved from all worldly miseries. Kanakadasa, another profound Haridasa, in one of his Devarnamas *Narayana Ninna Namaondirutire* in Aarabhi declares that when Aadi Keshava is there why aspire and take refuge in other Gods (*Ballida Neleyadikeshavanirutire Chillare Daivada Hambalinyatakaiyya* ?). In the Devarnama *Rama Embuva Eradu Aksharada Mahimeyanu Pamararu Tavenu Ballaraiyya* ? sung in Shuddhabangala, Purandaradasa says for ordinary folk to understand the significance of Rama mantra, the mantra which the Lord Iswara administers to Devi Parvati for obtaining self-realization, they should just meditate on Sri Rama mantra to attain Moksha.

Without controlling one's mind and steadfast devotion, any amount of worship is just useless (as in the Abhogi kriti *Manasunilpa Shaktileka Pothe*). Further, Tyagaraja says that where is the need for other mantras and tantras, if one has perfect control over his mind (and himself), as observed in the Sankarabharana kriti *Manasu Svadhinamaina*. One who realizes that he is not the body, instead everything is only Rama; who considers the whole universe as His *Maaya*, and who is absolutely free from vicious sense enjoyments, why should a person worry for the cycle of birth and death (*Punarjanmam* !).

Very interestingly Tyagaraja declares that mere observance of vedic rituals will only increase distress, thus qualifying for *Punarjanmam*. Instead, one should indulge always in chanting Rama mantra, swim in the ocean of devotion, and further says that all those, be he a *Sura (Deva)* or *Bhusura (Brahmana)*, without such devotion is only a burden on the earth (*Bhubharamu*) as in the Jayamanohari kriti *Niibhakti Bhagyasudhanidhi Nidede Janmamam* .

In the beautiful Asaveri kriti *Samayamu Delisi*, Tyagaraja says that it does not matter if a Nastika (a fool not believing in God) lives or dies if he does not acquire *Punya* through rightful deeds. To substantiate this statement he goes on citing several examples, namely, it is immaterial if a mad man is or is not pleased at hearing His glory; it is of no consequence for blind eyes to remain open or

closed; it is of no avail if *Panakapuja* is done in stray/ugly places; it is of no concern whether a miser millionaire lives or is dead; it is immaterial that a song unrelated to Rama is or is not sung; and finally he says that it is of no concern whether one takes a human body or not if in his heart he does not have devotion to Rama.

In the Rasali raga kriti *Aparadhamulanorva*, Tyagaraja submits to Rama to excuse him for all the sins he has so far committed, and as a tribute he is offering hundred songs (*Nannokanibrova Teliya Keertana Shataka*) such that Rama may bless him. In the Kapi kriti *Mivalla Gunadosha memi*, he is of the opinion that everything (good or bad) happening in his life is of his own making and no one is to be blamed. To substantiate this, he quotes several examples such as, why blame the goldsmith if the gold given is not pure, if one fails to do good deeds/charity in earlier births why blame you (Rama) for happenings taking place now ?

Tyagaraja condemns all those persons devoid of Rama bhakti, but who pose superior body strength and high birth, yet pretend as a real bhakta, as portrayed in the Saveri kriti *Balamu Kulamu Yela, Ramabhakti Kaaranamu*. Strict but eternal devotion to Rama qualifies one to acquire all *Siddhis*. To strengthen this point he cites a good number of examples, namely , can diving into water by crows and fish be considered a sacred morning bath? Can closing of the eyes by cranes be treated as divine meditation? Can goats feeding on leaves be considered as devout fast? Can birds soaring high be compared with Sun and Moon? Can ordinary people in *Sadhu's* garb and living in huts be called great sages? Can monkeys living in the forest be taken as leading *vanavasa*? If beggars in the garb of true devotees (*Jangama*) remain silent, can they be considered genuine *Maunis*? If children go about undressed, can they be declared *Digambaras/Avadhutas*? At the end Tyagaraja says that the true devotion to Shri Ramachandra is like a currency note, acceptable all the time to all the people. In the Ghana raga (Goula) Pancharatna kriti *Dudukugala Nanne Dorakoduku Brochura Ento*, Tyagaraja lists a whole lot of bad things and evil deeds which an ordinary person (like him !) routinely does in this mundane world, yet Tyagaraja puts all these blemishes upon him and pleads to Rama to pardon and forgive him.

For Shri Rama's irresponsiveness towards him, in spite of his repeated outpourings in innumerable number of kritis, he goes on reasoning the various facts for this lapse. In the Shuddhabangala kriti *Toline Jesina Pujaphalamu* he accepts the failure due to his defective worship in past births, as a result of which he is subjected to frequent ridicules/humiliations by his contemporaries. In the Kokiladhwani kriti *Tolinenu jesina Pujaphala milage* he attributes his failure due to his beginning the role of *Bhakta* at an inauspicious time (*Varjya Kalamemo Tyagarajanuta*). "It is all due to the evil effects of my previous births, so you need not worry about me", he accepts.

As an expression of gratitude, Tyagaraja confesses in the Todi kriti *Daasharathi Nirunamu Dirpana Tarama*, that Shri Rama took birth in Raghukula just to inspire him to compose divine kritis, and with that Rama made his name remain immortal/indelible forever, and for having obliged him so, is it ever possible for him to repay his debt, in any form/in any way or means ?

In the Mukhari kriti *Chintistunnade Yamudu* Tyagaraja ironically chides Yama, the God of death, that looking at the people chanting the Ramataraka mantra with steadfast devotion as well as singing his kritis in praise of Lord Rama, Yama has become restless and anxious for not being able to accomplish his duties well.

Summing up, Tyagaraja concludes that just by worshiping Rama with flowers of sacred/holy names (Shiva, Rama, Krishna, etc.) is more than sufficient to obtain salvation from the worldly miseries, as depicted in the Sri raga kriti *Namakusumamulache*. In the Manohari kriti (this is supposed to be the last kriti of Tyagaraja) *Paritapamu Ganiyadina Palukula Marachitivo*, Tyagaraja reminds Rama to forgive him for all that has happened and to take him along with Him in another five days (*Padiputalapai Karunincheda*), which Rama himself had assured to have said to Sita, while boating in the river Sarayu (*Sarayu Madhyambunana*).

Dr. R. N. Tharanathan, Additional Director (Retd.), CFTRI, Mysore, is a renowned musician (Younger of the Rudrapatnam Brothers).

Pudukkottai Manpundia Pillai - Legendary Khanjira Player

Mrudanga Vidwan Shri Mannarkoil J. Balaji

"Works of art makes rules; rules do not make works of art – Claude debussy"



Introduction

Pudukkottai Manpundia Pillai or Lanther Mamundi as he was popularly called was a pioneer in the evolution of khanjira and laya in Carnatic music. Before Manpundia Pillai there were not much laya expositions as we see today. Mridangam and ghatam were merely accompaniments to music. The music was either for Harikatha or dance programmes and there was less scope for elaborate rhythmic expositions. Neither the artistes nor the instruments *per se*, had any separate identity of their own. The reason for this is that the normal concert format which we are now aware of was an unknown entity at that time. A short recess taken by Harikatha artistes provided mrudangam artistes with a short duration

to play a solo. The idea was only to keep the audience engaged, till the Harikatha artiste resumed the performance.

Role of Thavil and exploration of rhythmic calculations in Nagaswaram Recitals

On the other hand, in Nagaswaram recitals, there was a lot of scope for elaborate rhythmic explorations. It will not be an exaggeration to mention here that it is basically through such explorations by the Thavil vidwans that we have so much of mathematical variations and developments in the Carnatic rhythm. They created innumerable varieties for different rhythmic cycles, which were later modified to suit the requirements of mrudangam. This was possible because the nagaswaram recitals were usually long and stretched throughout the night during temple festivals. It gave a lot of scope for them to explore a rhythmic cycle from different perspectives. This laid the foundation for longer mrudangam solos and "paved the way for incorporating many an arithmetic-oriented execution, as a beacon-light to other percussive instruments".¹

Guru

Against this background, a lanther man, from King Ramachandra Thondaiman's Palace, Pudukkottai, took keen interest in Carnatic Music and was deeply interested in various aspects of tala. He developed a keen sense of rhythm while listening to various types of programmes, Harikathas, dance etc., and was able to internalise the rhythmic varieties instantly. He used to listen to the concerts of various visiting musicians to the court and the concerts of court musicians viz., Mia brothers, Nannu Mia and Chotu Mia, who used to sing tunelessly while playing Dholak. A story goes that one day this Lanther man was listening to a concert and he happened to loudly appreciate a rhythmic pattern, much to the chagrin of vidwans and great rasikas. The vidwans and rasikas chided him and also said "lanther man is trying to become a vidwan". These words upset the lanther man. Shouldn't a lanther man learn music? Is he not capable of appreciation? All these questions brought him closer to thavil vidwan Mariappa Thavilkar at Pudukkottai and he requested him to accept him as his disciple and Mariappa was more than glad to do so. This lanther man was none other than Pudukkottai Manpundia Pillai.

Khanjira

Under the rigorous training of Mariappa Thavilkar of Pudukkottai, Manpundia Pillai developed lakshana gnana (grammar of rhythm). Prior to getting the grace of Mariappa Thavilkar, Manpundia

¹ Dr B M Sundaram "Pazhani Muthayya Pillai"

Pillai was adept at playing an instrument called "Dep" (A big circular tambourine like instrument) which was a very popular instrument at that time used in folk dance performances called "Lavani". Manpundia Pillai had the innate ability to reproduce the thavil patterns in this instrument, during various training sessions with Mariappa Thavilkar. The "Dep" was a big instrument and was not found suitable for holding with one hand for longer durations, as concerts spanned more than 4 hours. Hence, it was Mariappa Thavilkar who suggested to Manpundia Pillai to modify the "Dep" to suit the sound and 'nada' required for Carnatic Music. Manpundia Pillai worked on the instrument and reduced the size of the instrument. He used jack-wood for the outer ring and used the skin of monitor lizard for the covering. He also made a small rectangular cut in the wood and inserted metal pieces or coins to add cymbal-like extra sound to the instrument. This predominantly "bass" instrument came to be called "Khanjira" and the credit for introducing it into mainstream Carnatic Music goes to Manpundia Pillai. Whatever calculations Mariappa Thavilkar played on the thavil, were dexterously repeated and even innovated, with this single-handed instrument by Manpundia Pillai. Thus, came about a grand tradition called "Pudukkottai Tradition of Mrudangam" based on the foundations given by thavil vidwans and improvised and innovated by Manpundia Pillai, who never had any musical lineage in the family. His family members were never close to any traditions of music. What else could be said other than divine will, that such a great thing could happen and a tradition could be set in motion, to be followed by many laya vidwans till today?

Life History

Pudukkottai Manpundia Pillai was born on 14-12-1859 to Ayyasami Servai and Nallammal. He belonged to a sect called Ahambadi. Ayyasami Servai was a permanent employee in the Pudukkottai Samasthana under Ramachandra Thondaiman as a Lanther Man and later Mamundi also followed suit. It was said Mamundi was paid Rs. 2.50 by the palace for this job.

Palace job was only an outlet for Mamundi to hone his rhythmic skills as it gave him lot of opportunity to listen to various types of programmes which were held from time to time. Not only did he develop strong rhythmic sense but he also developed keen aesthetic sense by listening to these concerts by submerging himself into the ethereal music of those times.

Approval for Khanjira

Under the able guidance of Mariappa Thavilkar he learned the rhythmic grammar and he was ready to introduce his instrument to the Carnatic music world. He started his journey to Kumbakonam where Sivakkozundu Nayanakkar, a renowned Nagaswaram vidwan lived who had a wealth of knowledge in laya-vyavaharas. Manpundia Pillai met him and played on his instrument and immediately Sivakkozundu Nayanakkar arranged a performance at Kumbeswarar Temple and that became Manpundia Pillai's first major performance. This was not all. Approval of any new instrument or a new laya vidwan had to be done by Mrudanga vidwan Narayanaswamy Appa (who was called "Father of modern day mrudangam playing"), who lived in Thanjavur. Narayanaswamy Appa used to organise Bhajan recitals in his house and he used to play mrudangam on those occasions which was a famous event during that time. Someone suggested to Manpundia Pillai to go and play this instrument in one such Bhajan recital. Thus started his journey into the world of Carnatic Music.

After reaching Narayanaswamy Appa's residence, Manpundia Pillai showed his instrument and also requested his approval for the same. Narayanaswamy Appa informed Manpundia Pillai about the ensuing Bhajan the next day and asked him to stay at his residence and play at the Bhajan.

Next day during the Bhajan, Manpundia Pillai was given a place to sit at the corner of the hall and after the Bhajan started everyone wondered what he was going to do with this small one-handed instrument. Narayanaswamy Appa started playing for the bhajan and also later asked Manpundia Pillai to accompany during kriti renditions. Manpundia Pillai was able to reproduce almost each and every phrase played by Narayanaswamy Appa and later he was also asked to play a solo in the

instrument. Manpundia Pillai played an excellent solo version and it was also said that after a few rounds of rhythmic variations no one from the audience could keep pace with him. Only one person was able to keep a steady rhythm and it was none other than legendary Narayanaswamy Appa. It was also said that he played Thisra Nadai on that day and everyone said it was against rules. But it was Narayanaswamy Appa who boldly said there was nothing against rules and what Manpundia Pillai played was very much acceptable. This was the blessing and approval Manpundia Pillai received from Narayanaswamy Appa.

After Narayanaswamy Appa's approval, Manpundia Pillai rode the Carnatic Music field like a giant and started accompanying all the stalwarts of his times. Many artistes started learning the rhythmic possibilities from him and he had many disciples to his credit.

Disciples

One of the foremost disciples of Manpundia Pillai was Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai, who was instrumental in developing moharas and korvais for various talas including rare tiruppugazh talas. It was said that once when Manpundia Pillai and Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai were making mohara for a very difficult Tiruppugazh tala, a big snake passed in between them which was left unnoticed by both of them as they were totally engrossed in the formation of a mohara.

Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai was initially adept at ghatam but later switched over to Mrudangam and Khanjira. He has played lots of concerts with Palghat Mani Iyer and was held in high esteem.

Other famous disciples were Palani Muthiah Pillai, (father of the Legendary Palani Subramania Pillai), Tiruchendur Ramaiah Pillai, Seithur Zamindar, Sankaradas Swamigal, Pudukkottai Ramaiah Pillai, Ramanathapuram Chitsabai Servai (Father of Ramanathapuram C S Murugabhoopathy) and others.

Manpundia Pillai also gave special training to the eminent vocalist Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer to hone the arithmetic skills while rendering laya patterns in swaras and Ragam, Tanam, Pallavis.



Pudukkottai Dakshinamurthy Pillai (Mrudangam), Konerirajapuram Vaidyanatha Iyer (Vocal), Manpundia Pillai (Khanjira)

Contribution to the world of Carnatic rhythm

Contribution of the Pudukkottai school to the world of Carnatic rhythm is immense and most of the arithmetic varieties and evolution that we hear today could be traced to either Manpundia Pillai or Dakshinamurthy Pillai, in one way or the other. Unfortunately, we have no recordings of the former to prove this but still enough corroborative evidences are found in the various speeches given by the likes of Palani Sri M. Subramania Pillai, Palghat Mani Iyer, Pallathur C. T. Lakshmanan, Ramanathapuram C. S. Murugabhoopathi, Ramanathapuram M. N. Kandaswamy, Trichy Sankaran and K. S. Kalidoss. These stalwarts have spoken extensively about Manpundia Pillai and also about Pudukkottai school's contribution to the world of Carnatic Rhythm through informal talks, lecture-demonstrations, documentation through magazines and also through training sessions.

The following could be considered broadly as the major contributions :

- 1) Evolution of longer percussion solos.
- 2) Khanjira as an accompanying instrument in concerts.
- 3) For the first time playing chatusram patterns in tisra nadai was introduced into the mainstream. Earlier thisram was approached as 3 per beat for an adhi tala of 8 beat per cycle. Pudukkottai school gave a new dimension to tisra nadai by introducing 3 * 4 instead of the usual 4 * 3, thereby expanding the scope of tisra nadai. Existing rhythmic ideas in chatusra nadai were extended to tisra nadai due to the introduction of this concept.
- 4) Chatusra tisram was a concept developed by the Pudukkottai school. This term is used to denote a rhythmic variety wherein every 3 on a chatusra nadai is made into 4. For example if there is 4 * 3 for a 3 beat then all the three will be made as 4. The logic for this is each of the pattern in chatusram, ie., Tha Ka Dhi Mi is construed to be having 3 gaps each and is rendered in 3rd speed. Not only this Tisra Khandam, Misra Khandam, Khanda Misram were also introduced during this period out of a strong influence of thavil tradition.
- 5) Tuning of the bass side of the mrudangam to the mandara sthayi shadjam was an innovation brought to Carnatic music by the Pudukkottai school, which was hitherto tuned to mandara sthayi panchamam.
- 6) Double gumukki was an innovation of the Pudukkottai school wherein there will be a bass sound while playing in the forward direction and another bass sound in the reverse direction on the bass side of the mrudangam.
- 7) Extensive fingering techniques and fast paced farans were developed both for the mrudangam as well as for the khanjira. For the khanjira, especially, separate fingering techniques and elaborate accompanying methods were evolved during this period.
- 8) Use of middle finger as a fixing finger for playing the syllable "Nam" added extra weight to the syllable and also provided ease while playing faster patterns which had "Nam" as their predominant syllable.
- 9) Many moharas and korvais were developed during this period for Thiruppugazh talas. Kalpita lessons were framed and these were earlier given only for Adi Tala. Pudukkottai school developed strong and logical kalpita lessons for the four major talas viz., Adi, Rupaka, Misra Chapu and Khanda Chapu. These lessons were also termed as Chatusra, Misra, Tisra and Khanda lessons respectively.
- 10) Lessons were not tala specific but were jati specific ie., they were intentionally made to represent jatis like Chatusra, Misra, Tisra, Khanda etc., so that they could be rendered when changing nadais in different talas. Most of the lessons spanned normally 4, 6 or 8 cycles making them easier to be adapted as nadai patterns in Adi Tala. For example if one wants to render misra nadai in Adi Tala, he has to simply look for a lesson in Misra Chapu which is having 4 or 8 cycles and render them in Adi Tala Misra Nadai. Based on one's experience this could be improvised and value additions could be made. But the seeds were sown by the stalwarts of Pudukkottai tradition years ago.
- 11) Accompaniment to kriti meant giving appropriate rhythmic phrases corresponding to the inherent laya of the kriti rendered by the vocalist than repetition of the pattern of the kriti itself. This gave accent on the bhava of the kriti than on the lyrical flow.² Manodharma aspects like extensive swara renditions, lengthier Ragam-Tanam-Pallavi renditions gained significance through the extensive arithmetic contributions propounded by Pudukkottai style.

² ".....it was against sampradaya to follow the kirtana on the mridanga in the same style as it was rendered by the vocal musician"- Palani Sri M Subramania Pillai on Mridangam Practice at a Lec-dem held at the Music Academy in 1958-The Journal of the Madras Music Academy, pp:23, Vol: XXIX, 1958.

Manpundia Pillai's korvai

One of the very famous korvais as recited by none other than Sangita Kalanidhi Palghat T. S. Mani Iyer in one of his lecture demonstrations on layam, is given below. The speciality of the Korvai is that it alternates between chatusram and tisram. The shift from chatusram to tisram is a bit tricky to render as both of them come at beat intervals. The korvai starts with tisram. (T is tisram which is given in bold and C is chatusram in normal letters).

(T) Thakadhi	Na / thom .	.. / tha	...	Thakadhi	Na / thom .	.. tha	...
Dhi . .	./ thaka	Dhi na thom . .	tha	Thakadhi	Na thom .	. thatha	Ka dhi na
Tha . .	. dhi .	.. gi	...	Na . .	. thom .	.. tha	...
Dhi . .	. gi .	.. na	...	Thom . .	. tha .	.. dhi	...
Gi . .	. na .	.. thom	(c)... tha	... dhi	... gi	... na	... thom
... tha	... dhi	... gi	... na	... thom	... tha	... dhi	... gi
... na	... thom	... (T) tha	. dhi .	gi . na	. thom .	Tha . dhi	. gi .
Na . thom	. tha .	Dhi . gi	. na .	(C) Thom . . . tha	. dhi . gi	. na . thom	. tha . dhi
. gi . na	. thom . tha	. dhi . gi	. na . thom	. thadhigi	Na thom/ thadhi	Gi na thom/ tha	Dhigi na thom
. thadhigi	Na thom/ thadhi	Gi na thom/ tha	Dhigi na thom	. thadhigi	Na thom/ thadhi	Gi na thom/ tha	Dhigi na thom (tha)

Conclusion

The story of Manpundia Pillai is ample evidence of a simple man, with absolutely no musical background, who could rise upto the level of setting in motion a great laya tradition, becoming the numero uno in the world of Carnatic percussion. He made an indelible impression in the firmament of laya and he also proved to show that through rigorous practice and with the grace of God, impossible could be made possible, which has withstood the ravages of time. A great Lord Muruga devotee that he was, he took up Sanyasa when he was 62 years old and he was called "Srilasri Murugananda Swamigal". He attained siddhi at Pudukkottai on 17th January 1922 which was on a Chaturthi day, one day before the Pushya Bahula Panchami Day, when Tyagaraja Aradhana is being observed every year. At the behest of Palani Muthiah Pillai, his son Palani M. Subramania Pillai built a temple at his samadhi out of the money he earned through concerts. At present the Holy Shrine is being maintained by Palani Shri M. Subramania Pillai Trust, Chennai. The trust organises annual Guru Puja during the month of January every year and this year it was held on 9th January 2015 at Pudukkottai.

Shri Mannarkoil J. Balaji is a performing musician having concert experience of 30 years and is known for his technical and aesthetic brilliance.

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A. Anantha Krishna Iyer - A Torchbearer of Dikshitar's Shishya Parampara

Smt. Revathi Sadasivam



◀ Shri Anantha Krishna Iyer

Anantha Krishna Iyer (1899-1959) was born at Kallidaikuruchi in Tirunelveli district of Tamil Nadu. He took to vaideeham as was the family practice and learnt the Vedas and Upanishads. He was proficient in Sanskrit, Telugu, Tamil, Malayalam and Grantham. An incident at the age of 16 made him put down his "darba kattu" and take to music. He started learning music from a lady who was the eldest daughter of Ambi Dikshitar (son of Subbarama Dikshitar who wrote the Sangeetha Sampradaya

Pradarshini), the Asthana Vidwan of the Maharajah of Ettayapuram. She saw a lot of promise in him and suggested that he learn from Ambi Dikshitar himself. Enthused by this he left for Ettayapuram and started gurukulavasam from the great guru. He not only learnt vocal and veena but lakshanas of music as well.



◀ Ambi Dikshitar

He had a burning desire to bring out Dikshitar's kritis to a larger public, and hence persuaded his guru to relocate to Chennai which had by then become a hub for Carnatic music. His guru agreed to come to Chennai. Iyer promised to take care of his guru till the very end, which he did. With his guru's blessings, he along with Vedantha Bhagavatar, a great Harikatha exponent of Kallidaikurichi jointly brought out Muthuswamy Dikshitar's Kamalamba Navavarnam in 1937 for which the foreword was written by Ambi Dikshitar himself. This book gives the meaning for every word in the kriti and raga lakshanas in detail.

While in Chennai, Ambi Dikshitar had many disciples like T. L. Venkataraman Iyer, Muthayya Bhagavatar, D. K. Pattammal and so on.

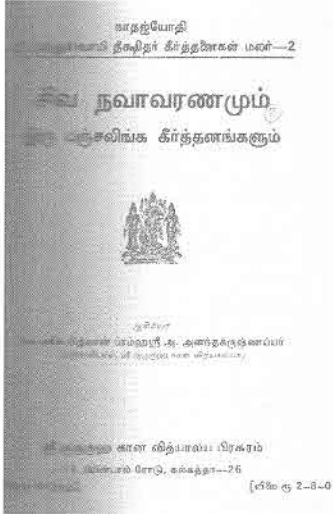
After Ambi Dikshitar's demise A. Krishna Iyer along with his younger brother A. Sundaram Iyer established a music school called Karnataka Vaineeka Gana Vidyalaya in Mylapore and Mambalam. Iyer carried on the propagation work by bringing out books like Gana Manjusha which contains small kritis and a few Varnams for music students. Navagraha kritis was released next with word to word meanings of the songs given therein. While in Chennai one of his prime disciples was the late Veena Vidushi Kalpakam Swaminathan.

Shri G. V. Raman, one of his close friends persuaded Iyer to relocate to Calcutta as he was posted there. Accordingly A. K. Iyer put his music school in charge of his brother and went to Calcutta with his family in 1937. The divine grace of Goddess Kali made him rethink about going back to Chennai and instead Ananthakrishna Iyer decided to settle down in Calcutta.

For a few years he had to be in Banaras as war was going on. At Banaras he and his disciples and family used to render Kasi Kshetra kritis of Dikshitar like *Gange Mam Pahi*, *Shri Vishvanatham*, *Ehi Annapurne* and others everyday. He also happened to worship the Shiva linga which Dikshitar had worshipped while at Kashi. Anantha Krishna Iyer set to tune some slokas like *Vishvanatham Ashtakam* and *Annapoorna Ashtakam*. He followed his guru's footsteps and composed a few songs which were a Varnam on Kali, kritis on Lord Muruga-Vallideva, *Sheetala mbam* in Vasantha raga.

As soon as he returned to Calcutta he established a music school called Shri Guruguha Gana Vidyalaya in the year 1943. This school still runs in Calcutta and teaches vocal music, veena and violin. He started the practice of conducting Jayanthi and Aradhana for Muthuswamy Dikshitar. He

started a magazine named Jyothi to propagate music through its columns. He was a strict disciplinarian as a teacher and used simple methods to teach music. For this he composed around 25 raga sancharams.



◀ *Siva Navavaranam*

His contribution to the music field is as follows:

1. Bringing to light a number of rare Dikshitar kritis from manuscripts which his guru Ambi Dikshitar had given him.
2. Publication of books in Tamil like Rama Navavaranam, Krishna Navavaranam, Siva Navavaranam, Abhayamba Navavaranam and Navagraha Kritis.

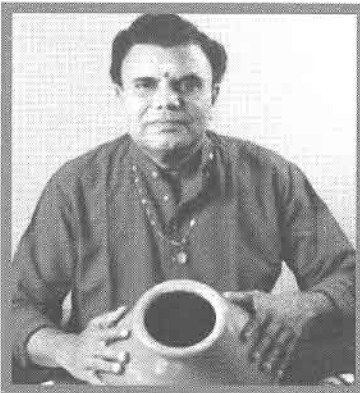
Each book is a collector's choice wherein all kritis have word meaning, the raga lakshanas, clear notations and sangatis as taught by his guru Ambi Dikshitar. The book Sangeetha Bala Bodhini contains among other basic lessons, rare Varnas of Ramaswami Dikshitar like - *Veera vasantha* in Todi, *Kamakshi* in Kanada, *Sri Kamalamba* in Kamala Manohari among others. A prabandha in Hamsadhvani, varnam of Vedantha Bhagavatar and kritis of trinity and Anantha Krishna Iyer's compositions are

also given in this book. This book has been reprinted in 2013 on the occasion of the Vidyalaya's 70 years of service to students. It has archival value too.

Many lesser known and not often heard kritis have been popularised by the Vidyalaya, like *Shri Vishvanatham* in Bhavani, *Herambaya* in Atana, *Gajanana*(Varnam) in Shankarabharanam and so on. Anantha Krishna Iyer's school rose to glory in the hands of his able son and student A. Anantha Raman Iyer (Ambi sir) and daughter A. Champakavalli. His other daughters also continued with the musical legacy. Today the 3rd and 4th generation of Iyer's family are carrying on this glorious heritage .They have carved a niche for themselves in the concert circuit as well, as able teachers. Their students are spread across the globe. Thus the shishya parampara continues.

Smt Revathi Sadasivam, an accomplished Veena artist, is the student and daughter-in-law of Shri A. Anantharaman Iyer, son of Brahmasri A. K. Iyer.

OBITUARY



◀ *Shri E. M. Subramaniam*

Eminent ghatam vidwan Shri E. M. Subramaniam passed away in Chennai on 23rd April this year. He had his tutelage under his father. He has been an A Grade artiste of All India Radio for the past 40 years. He was awarded the title of Kalaimamani by the Tamil Nadu Government in 2000 and was also a recipient of the Sangeet Natak Akademi Award in 2011. EMS, as he was fondly called was a long time teacher in the Government Music College at Chennai. He has accompanied many senior musicians including top mrudangam players like Palghat Mani Iyer, Umayalpuram K. Sivaraman, T. K. Murthy and tabla players such as Ustad Allarakha Khan, Kishen Maharaj and Zakir Hussain.

Reaching out through Music

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan



Devareddy in a recital

December 3 was World Day for the Disabled, to focus on the needs and rights of those who are differently abled. Devareddy Chinchala of Bengaluru, who is blind, was invited to give a recital of Hindustani music at the Music Academy hall in Chennai that day, at the invitation of the Rotary Club. While he is not the first or only visually impaired musician, he is certainly unique in what he does, not just as someone trying to overcome a handicap and earn a living but as someone who reaches out to others who are blind and helps them lead independent lives through music. He is "rewriting the destiny" of similarly handicapped girls of the younger generation.

Born in a farming family in rural north Karnataka, he was blind from birth but was drawn to music right from childhood and used to enjoy listening to recitals at the local temple whenever possible. His father, worried about the boy's future, would chide him for his interest in a "useless" pursuit -- so one day the boy ran away from home, and soon found his way to an ashram run by Pandit Puttaraj Gavai, a blind musician, in Gadag district where visually impaired boys were taught music. Here he discovered that many families from the surrounding areas that brought their blind daughters to learn music, were turned away by the teacher because he did not want to take responsibility for girls in his residential ashram. The 12 year old Devareddy took a vow, that when he began earning, he would teach blind girls music, without charging anything.



*Devareddy and wife Asha, flanked by their two children.
At the back are some of his differently abled students*

When subsequently he got a job as music teacher in a government school at Bengaluru, he chose a girl from an orphanage, and married her. The two of them set up house in South Bengaluru. Government school pay scales are notoriously low; he had to travel to North Bengaluru taking two public buses, but the government was insensitive and turned down his request for a transfer to a school nearer to his residence. No matter – he rented a two room flat, and took in blind girls whom he fed free (on his school teacher salary) and taught music (free, again). Soon he had 15 girls, all blind

(his wife Asha was the only sighted person in that household of 16 blind people). She cooks for them all, the girls learn music according to the syllabus for the State music exam so that they can pass exams and take up jobs as music teachers – two of the girls have already got such jobs and moved out, to become independent in their own right.

The Puttaraj Gavai Trust that Reddy set up with donations from supporters, is now ten years old and helps meet the expenses of this unique, free residential music training centre. A ladies club funds the monthly milk bill for the girls, a grocer donates 25 kg of rice every month, other philanthropists donate in cash and kind, to fund either a day's food expenses or sponsor a special meal, to eke out Devareddy's salary from his job as school teacher. The girls perform, tunefully, as a group wherever invited, presenting classical and semi-classical songs in Kannada, Hindi and Sanskrit in Hindustani style, and the donations flow. At a recent recital in Malleswaram, someone from the audience, impressed by the well-coordinated renderings by the girls, donated an audio player, someone spontaneously handed over a cheque for Rs 5,000 as his contribution, someone else gave a stack of music CDs left behind by his NRI son, so that the girls may enrich their repertoire further. Electronic tamburas have been donated too. Devareddy accompanies them on the harmonium, and even has a blind boy providing tabla accompaniment.

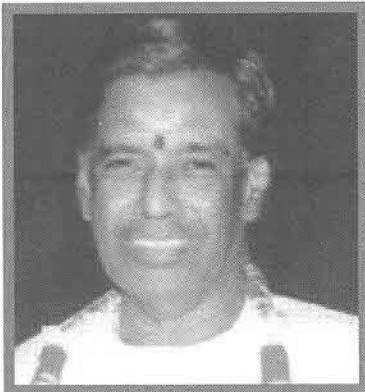
Music is one pursuit that a visually impaired person can take to -- violinist M. Chandrasekhar comes to mind. But Devareddy has gone beyond seeking economic independence, and reached out to others in a way that few even among those without handicaps attempt. Even his decision to seek a life partner from an orphanage, speaks of his desire to enrich others' lives, and spread joy and hope in other people's lives.

Just before taking the train to Chennai for his recital, he came over, to ask if I could help him recall some khayal lyrics that he had forgotten. As I refreshed his memory, he pulled out his Braille writer and punched in the words on his notebook, as he could not read out from the Bhatkhande volumes I had with me. With God's blessings as he puts it, he and the girls pick up their white canes and "get on with their lives", using music as a vehicle.

(Devareddy can be reached at his website www.blindmusicschool.com. Donations of Rs 400 pay for a day's dinner, Rs 100 for milk and biscuits, and Rs 1200 for full day's meals, and donations qualify for tax exemption under sec 80G).

Dr. Sakuntala Narasimhan is a Bengaluru based journalist, author, musician and consumer rights activist.

OBITUARY



◀ *Shri Vaigal S. Gnanaskandan*

Carnatic vocalist, teacher and former Music Producer at All India Radio, Shri Vaigal S. Gnanaskandan passed away in Chennai on 3rd May 2015 after a prolonged illness. He was a disciple of Dandapani Desigar and had also learnt from Shri Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer. He established the Gnanaskandan Trust which organized several programmes and encouraged upcoming musicians. Some of his well-known disciples are Sikkil Gurucharan, Gayatri Girish, V. Sankaranarayanan and Kausalya Sivakumar.

Portrayal of Various Nayikas in the Ramayana

Ms. Ojaswita Krishnaa Chaturvedi



Ashtanayika

Indian classical art forms find their sources and essence in Vedic literature. It is for this reason that every performing or visual art of ancient India is closely related to history and legends. Classical dance forms of our country share the same features. These dances were derived from sacred texts and honoured as a means of worship to the Supreme. Praising of the performing stage as a *yagya shala*, Bharata muni has directly indicated the high level of sanctity in the art form.

When it comes to Classical dance, the dancer is a devotee seeking the association of the Supreme. Various aspects of the dance represent the yearning of the soul for the supreme soul. The dancer symbolizes a female who is eternally related to her beloved, the Lord. She displays numerous situations of a heroine in relation to her lover. In these different situations, different types of heroines are depicted. These heroines have been classified into eight types by the great

sage Bharata muni in his *Natya Shastra* and the combination of these heroines or 'nayikas' altogether is known as *Ashtanayika*.

In this work, the main focus is on the epic *Ramayana*. The various *Nayikas* that are highlighted upon in this legend will be discussed here forth. Use of different literature has been done to diversify the topic.

Swadheenabhartrika nayika – Seeta Devi



Seeta Devi

The most common and popular *nayika* that would come to any individual's mind while contemplating the *Ramayana* is Seeta devi in the form of a *Swadheenabhartrika*. *Natya Shastra* describes this *nayika* as:

सुरतातरिसैः बद्धो यस्या पार्श्वे तु नायकः
सांद्रा मोद गुण प्राप्ता भवेत् स्वाधीनभारिका: (24:214)

'Through her love and other characters, she who has attracted her beloved to be by her side at all times is known as *swadheena bhartrika nayika*.'

Maharishi Valmiki describes the glories of Seeta devi after the marriage ceremony as follows:

प्रिया तु सीता रामस्य दाराः पितृ कृता इति
गुणात् रूप गुणात् च अपि प्रीतिः भूयो अभिवर्धते (1:77:26)

"Seeta became the beloved of Rama, an ideal wife. Through her various beauty forms and loads of qualities, she managed to increase the Love of Rama for her again and again."

With her cumulative abilities of love, Seeta devi attracted her Lord to be by her side. She was compliant to him and thus gradually won over his love in every aspect. Hence, her characteristics match that of a *swadheena bhartrika* as described by Bharata muni.

Kalahantarita Nayika – Sati Devi

The above heroine has been described by Bharata muni as follows:

ईर्ष्या कलह निष्क्रान्तो यस्या नागच्छति प्रियः
सामर्षावश सम्प्राप्ता कालाहान्तरिता भवेत् (24:215)

'She, whose lover is separated from her due to jealousy or quarrel, is known as kalahantarita nayika. She is sorrowful at her situation.'

This situation has been experienced by Sati Devi when she tried to examine the greatness of Shri Rama, confronting the orders of Lord Shiva. When she sees Shri Rama lamenting over his abducted wife, she doubts his supremacy and urges to test him, despite the disapproval of her beloved, Lord Shiva. When her test fails, she returns and in fear of Shiva, she falsely tells him that she did not try to assess the Lord at all. Lord Shiva, knower of the events of all times, could realise her deeds and thus quietly gave up his relation with her as she took the form of mother Seeta to test Shri Rama. Seated unaccompanied, Devi Sati harshly regrets her actions. Goswami Tulsidas has described her pitiful situation as follows:

हृदय सोनु समुझत निज करनी । चिंता अमित जाई नहि बरनी ॥
कृपासिंधु सिव परम अगाथा । प्रगट न कहेउ मोर अपराधा ॥
संकर रुख अवलोकि भवानी । प्रभु मोहि तजेउ हृदय अकुलानी ॥
निज अघ समुझि न कछु कहि जाई । तपई अवा इवा उर अधिकारी ॥ (1:57:1-2)

"She understood where she erred and got worried. Her anxiety increased to limits that cannot be described. She thought 'Lord Shiva is exceedingly merciful and has thus not declared my sin aloud'. She examined the attitude of Shiva and comprehended that her Lord has now forsaken her. Thinking thus, her heart filled with nervousness. Knowing that the fault was hers, she could not speak anything but her heart constantly burnt like a charcoal on heat."

Although there is no form of jealousy here, there is a silent quarrel between the celestial couple that has separated them at heart. Mother Sati is clearly depicted as a nayika who has lost the company of her beloved due to her mistake. Her internal pain and distress speak out loud and present her sorrowful condition.

Proshita Patika – Urmila

Bharata muni describes this nayika as one with the following characteristics:

गुरुकार्यन्तर वशाद यस्या वै प्रोषित प्रियः
प्रारुह्यलककेशान्ता भवेत् प्रोषित भारिका (24:218)

'One whose husband has left to another place for an important business is known as proshita bhartrika. She is depicted as a lady who has abandoned her ornaments and left her hair loose.'

A Proshita bhartrika or proshita patika is a special amalgamation. She has full faith over her husband and is sorrowful in his absence hence she has shades of both swadheena bhartrika and virahotkanthita nayikas in her.

When Lord Rama headed for exile, Lakshmana accompanied him too. With the permission of his beloved Urmila, he took her leave and assured her that he shall return to her right after the exile period. She patiently waited for him for fourteen years, passing each moment with ultimate agony.

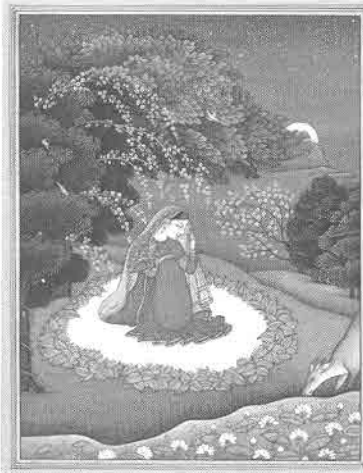
Naturally abandoning all her comforts, she is flawlessly described as a proshita patika in the treatise *Saket* of Mythili Sharan Gupt.

प्रिय ने सहज गुणों से दीक्षा दी थी प्रणय जो तेरी ।
आज प्रतीक्षा द्वारा लेते है वे यहाँ परीक्षा मेरी ॥
तरसूँ मुझ सी मैं ही सरसे हरसे हँसे प्रकृति प्यारी ।
सबको सुख होगा तो मेरी भी आयेगी बारी ॥
अब जो प्रियतम को पाऊँ ।
तो इच्छा है उन चरणों की रज में आप रमाऊँ ॥
मैं अपने को आप मिटाकर जाकर उनको लाऊँ ।
श्रान्त पवन से वै आवे मैं सुराभ सामान समाऊँ ॥

"O Love! With his swift qualities, my beloved taught me your aspects. Is he taking my test today using this method of anticipation and delay? As I lament within myself like none other, this lovely nature continues to be joyful. If everyone has the time of happiness, then surely, my chance will come too. Once I get my beloved now! All I desire is to blend myself in the dust of his feet. I will forsake my identity and bring him to me. He shall come to me like the flowing wind and I will merge into him like a beautiful smell."

These lines are just a few shades of what has been described in the whole treatise. Maithili Sharan Gupt has written *Saket* with the main prospect of relaying the status of Urmila as she waits for her beloved. From the above lines, it is clear that she is eagerly waiting for the arrival of Shri Lakshmana with full trust and high hopes of the time passing soon, thus depicting a proshita patika.

Virahotkanthita Nayika – Seeta Devi



Seeta Devi in the Ashoka gardens of Ravana

A virahotkanthita nayika has the following attributes:

अनेक कार्य व्यासगात यस्या नागच्छति प्रियः

तदनागत दुःखार्ता वीरहोत्कन्धीता तु सा ॥ (24:213)

'A virahotkanthita nayika is at utmost sorrow, lamenting the non-arrival of her beloved who could not come due to some other reasons.'

This nayika experiences a lot of grief and mourns the absence of her love. She pines to be united to him but is incapable of reaching him.

Goswami Tulsidas ji describes Seeta devi in the Ashoka gardens of Ravana. She remembers the association of Shri Rama and mourns over her condition of being separated from him as Hanuman looks in bewilderment.

कह सीता बिधि भा प्रतिकूल । मिलई न पावक मिटई न सूला ॥
देखिअत प्रगट गगन अंगारा । अवनि न आवत एकउ तारा ॥
पावकमय ससि स्रवत न आगी । मानहु मोहि जानि हत भागी ॥
सुनहि बिनय मम बिटप असोका । सत्य नाम करु हरु मम सोका ॥
नूतन किसलय अनल समाना । देहि अगिनि जानि करहि निदाना ॥
देखि परम बिरहाकुल सीता । सो छन कर्पिह कल्प सम बीता ॥ (6:11:3-6)

She said "Destiny itself has gone against me. I cannot even get fire here to burn my mortal body and get rid of this distress. There are so many fire spots (stars) in the sky, but not even one comes near me! This moon appears to be full of fire (in his absence) and yet it does not even let loose a single spark for me! Seems like it also knows how unfortunate I am (to be away from my beloved). Oh Ashoka tree! Do heed my request! Do me a favour and prove your name to be true [Ashoka means one who releases anguish]. Your flowers to me seem to be as hot as fire but I know that even you will not give me a single one of them!" Looking at this viraha condition of Mother Seeta, that one moment experienced by Hanuman seemed to be equal to thousands of years.

In her situation, Seeta Devi only finds one resort to her sorrow of being separated from Lord Rama – death. She urges to get fire from somewhere in which she can burn her body and cosmically unite with her beloved. Her mourning is a typical example of a virahotkanthita nayika's anxiety.

Thus described above are a few examples of nayikas in the epic of Ramayana. Ashtanayikas have been a centre point of attraction among ancient arts and our culture too. In addition, they find a large scope in spiritual poetry too as described above.

Ms Ojaswita Krishnaa Chaturvedi is a PhD Scholar in the Department of Electrical and Electronics Engineering, University of Botswana and a Bharatanatyam and Kuchipudi dancer.

FORM IV

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I, Shri V. S. Amarnath Sury, hereby declare that the particulars given above are true to the best of my knowledge and belief.

Music and Temple Rituals

Shri R. Venkat



If Bhakti marga is the easiest route to salvation in this Kali Yuga, then by using the vehicle of music, the route becomes even easier. Music is mentioned as one of the sixty four upacharas performed to appease the Lord. Most music and dance performances used to be performed within the precincts of a temple in those days as a dedication to the Lord. The performances were open to the public and were performed without any pecuniary benefits.

The Agama sastras have even specified the ragas to be sung or played in the temple. Generally, the nagaswaram and thavil are the instruments that are played in the temple since they can be heard even at a distance as also for their tonal quality. During the first prahara between 5 a.m. and 6 a.m. ragas like Bhoopalam, Bhauli or Malayamarutham are played. These ragas with shuddha rishabham and shuddha dhaivatam have a matutinal quality about them. These are best played at a languorous tempo even as dawn is about to break and the Lord is about to be woken up by the tirupalliezhuichi. At around 8a.m. ragas like Dhanyasi, Saveri or Asaveri are played. At around 10 a.m. ragas like Suratti or Manirangu are played. In the evening, Kambhoji or Sankarabharanam with sharper notes are played. Towards the close of the day, i.e., during Sayanaasana, ragas like Neelambari or Ananda Bhairavi are played. It is said that people living around the temple keep track of the hour by identifying the raga that is played at that time. While the above mentioned ragas are played during the course of the day, the one raga that is prescribed for specific rituals is Gambheera Nattai. The musical form adopted is called the Mallari. There are five different types of Mallari, although they are all played in Gambheera Nattai only. These different types of Mallaris are:

tirtha mallari

kumbha mallari

ther mallari

taligai mallari

purappadu mallari

Tirtha mallari: It is a practice in many temples in the South to bring the water required for the day's worship from the nearby river or pond. This is generally done ceremoniously and the water is collected in a "kudam" and brought to the temple on elephant back. This ritual is accompanied by the nagaswaram and the tirtha mallari is played.

Taligai mallari: This type of mallari is generally played when food (neivedhyam) is offered to the Lord.

Kumbha mallari: This type of mallari is played when the Lord is welcomed to an appointed place with a poorna kumbha.

Purappadu mallari: This type of mallari is the most common of all mallaris and is played with a lot of gusto immediately after the Lord is brought out in a procession.

Ther mallari: The "ther" is the huge temple chariot on which the Lord is brought during Brahmotsava days. The "ther", owing to its large size, is always parked outside the temple. The Lord is generally brought from the utsava mandapam to the "ther" stand in a "palki" and mounted on the "ther". The ther mallari is played at this stage.

Mallaris create an exciting tempo when played by the dual nagaswaram players to the accompaniment of thavil. Mallaris have been composed in different talas such as Triputa, Dhruva and Matya talas. They are played in three speeds, namely, vilamba, madhyama and druta kalas, as also in the tisra nadai. Since mallari-s are meant to be played only on the nagaswaram, the sahityas are generally not known to most people. The sahitya of one of the mallaris goes as follows:

Aayati Rajagopala, Akhila Loka paripaala,

Raja rajaathi raja vraja raja, madhu vrushni bhoja shoora kula raja,

Saara saayatha vilochana bhavabhaya nirodha vilochana manda haasa.....(Aayati)

Mallaris are known for their grandiose structure and presentation and match the larger-than-life feeling associated with temples of yore.

Shri R. Venkat is a freelance writer and lecturer in music and aesthetics.

Days of Chaste Sacrifice for Arts

Shri 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan

Indian Arts have always been affluent admittedly born of sumptuous intellectual application, loving devotion and inherited dedication, all soaked in personal sacrifice. Whether they are highly developed arts like Bharatanatyam or Classical music or is one of the comparatively well-developed folk arts, they were all born, suckled, sustained and developed with varying degrees of self-sacrifice and are not the fruits of mundane gifts of nature dished out freely. Just gather a cursory view of the personal lives of the Classical Carnatic Trinity or the artistes of yore of classical dances; one could easily appreciate the immensity of their sincerity, laudable perseverance and attendant sacrifice of time and energy to attain and maintain the needed expertise and proficiency.

They toiled hard and for long but were they ever sure of returns for sustenance of life during the ensuing long aftermath of the period of training? No. The musician had to wait for the occasional marriage reception in a rich, cultured family or a festival in any of the famous temples in the area, as sabhas etc., are creations of the recent, urban-oriented past. The artiste tightened his belt and had to undergo the training or the rehearsal therein for months and years out of pure, chaste passion. Expertise could never be gained nor could it be maintained sans rigorous practice and continuous rehearsals. Having attained at long last the meritorious grade, could he retire and gather the joy of rest in expectation of professional offers flowing in like monsoon rains. No. The practice in the chosen art had to continue though minimally, irrespective of any professional offer flowing in or not. He had to keep up minimal trial practices for long to maintain his grade and momentum in the chosen art. Dedicated practice is good and draws appreciation, but the family too waits to be maintained. In spite of this known critical drawback, our ancestors had applied themselves heart and soul, sustained and developed the arts to dizzy heights of perfection, excellence and fragrance. If there is pervading bright sunshine now in the forum of arts, our ancestors should initially, and of course, deservedly be thanked.

To stress the magnitude of the lofty sacrifices of artistes in the past and lay bare the fact of absence of successive, remunerative chances those days and the attendant situation at homes and in society, I arranged for and trained the senior girls of Sri Devi Parvathavardhini Girls High School, Rameswaram to enact a drama when I was its official Correspondent during 1965-67. It was an awesome success. An account of the script thereon from my forthcoming book *Goodbye Garland* follows to convey the unwritten hardships, nay sacrifices, faced and willingly undergone by veterans of the past in maintaining the pristine glory of our arts! Now the account on that drama in *Goodbye Garland* takes over. Pray, lend your attention.

'The head of the family, a senior musician, finds a communication to go over to Delhi to present a concert on the succeeding Sunday, incidentally mentioning that accompanists had been arranged. There was an agreeable spurt of exhilaration, excitement in the family naturally, since for the earlier two years there was total drought of opportunities to the good Vidwan! The good lady of the house Lakshmi was looking keen on selecting items for his comfortable travel and stay, special dress for his concert, etc. That charming girl Lalitha, who had come from Ayodhya after her marriage a few months earlier, was visibly keen in checking and tuning the tambura. Young grandson Mukesh took over the task of marshalling music books and notes lying scattered. Like that the house was bursting with stressed activity even as the musician, sitting aloof in the front room, was drawing up mentally the program with details of songs and tunes – bhāva, rāga, tāla - he should handle at the forthcoming concert. The excitement was on at its 'Everestian' zenith when eldest son, Pichan strangely arrived from Madurai. Getting the news of his dad proceeding to Delhi for a concert, he was truly glad. If one wanted to draw the elixir of profound, distilled joy, happiness, he should have gathered and stolen a silent visit to the musician's house then. 'Dad! I will go to the station for reservation and come. I have the money. Give me the letter to select the particular train to be there on time for the concert and for your return.' 'Lalitha! It is in my purse. Give it to Pichan.' [He peruses the letter.] 'Oh! Concert is at 5.30

PM, Dad.' He sat down strangely to read it again and again. His face turned visibly murky! In a suffocating breath, he asked, 'Daddy! When did you get this letter?' 'Afternoon, after meals. I found it on the floor near the door! The postman should have dropped it. Why all the questions? We can discuss all that later. Go for the reservation as reservation time would be over.' 'Dad! Calm yourself... You went to Delhi two years back and gave a concert!! This letter is of that old time recital. None of you had seen the date in your passionate yearning for a concert!' 'SHOCK! Astonished, astounded, stunned, amazed, all sank down and sat wherever they were!! Tears flowed down from many pairs of chaste eyes on the stage. The vast audience seated on the lawn in front sank into abrupt, indescribable, unqualifiable quietude with eyes drenched and faces turned grim and sad. The entire assemblage was looking forward to an auspicious, beneficial tour for the deserving good musician. All sat pinned down emotionally to the floor wherever they were!! Fortunately the old Vidwan and his lady had the spiritual gift to withstand and stomach the unheard of, unspelt shock! For several minutes, the audience forgot to open their mouths or rise up to go home. Actually, the Minister [this was real please] who was witnessing it all among the audience was the sole, the first individual, to leave with his security as it was already late to catch the scheduled train waiting for him to board it.' *Rajagopalan was the lone individual pleased at the grand success of the show he had presented.****

*** *Rajagopalan coached the girls to enact a drama to canalize and upgrade their artistic aspirations. The theme was simple and short but exciting and unpredictable till the last scene revealed it.*

Shri 'Garland' N. Rajagopalan is a retired civil servant and author of the 'Garland' series of books, an inspiring and informative work on Carnatic music.

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Tribute to Shri R. Pichumani Iyer

Shri P. Vasanth Kumar



← Shri R. Pichumani Iyer

With the diminishing numbers of Veena players in the Carnatic style in the country, the passing away of my Guru R. Pichumani Iyer has created another vacuum amongst Vainikas. Having been under his tutelage for almost 17 years made me realize that Veena music needs a higher level of musical taste to appreciate the greatness of the instrument. Never seeking opportunities to perform, he performed willingly when sabhas and other institutions approached him for concerts. Laurels came his way in the forms of "Kalaimamani" award from the Government of Tamilnadu, The TTK memorial award from The Music Academy, Madras, Sangeetha Kala Nipuna from the Mylapore Fine Arts Club, Chennai besides other awards. He

was a top graded artiste of All India Radio and Doordarshan. Pichumani Iyer qualified as a Sangeetha Bhushanam from the Annamalai University, where he was groomed by the likes of Sangeetha Kalanidhi K. S. Narayanaswamy, Gomathi Sankara Iyer and others. His initial training was under one Kuppanna in Tiruchirapalli. A long stint with AVM studios had him work with leading film music composers like M.S. Viswanathan, Viswanathan Ramamurthy and others. He bid adieu to playing for films and devoted himself to pursue Classical Carnatic music. His numerous disciples include, R. Visweswaran, Suresh Krishna (from the TVS family), the Iyer brothers based in Australia, B. Kannan, Vasantha Krishnamoorthy, besides many others.

Pichumani Iyer was a staunch devotee of the Paramacharya of Kanchi and at the Seer's instructions he performed at tandem with Lalgudi Jayaraman and flautist N. Ramani at the Kanchi mutt on a couple of occasions. His methodology of teaching was a slow system and would never rush disciples to learn compositions in a hurry. He would ensure that the students perfected the lessons of the previous class before he proceeded further. For many years during the period when this writer was his disciple, only one line of a Varnam would be taught in a class. This ensured that the patantharam remained firmly etched in one's mind. His repertoire of Varnams was amazing and covered almost 100 of these compositions. As a composer he has a few tillanas in Ragas like Vasantha Kaishiki (Vasantha with the kaishiki nishadam), Brindavana Saranga etc to his credit.

Pichumani Iyer was one of the early artistes to cut a long playing record of Veena music for HMV. This record continues to be broadcast by All India Radio, Chennai occasionally. He has also recorded for other companies like Sangeetha etc. He enjoyed a very friendly relationship with fellow Veena Vidwans like S. Balachandar, Chittibabu, Vidya Sankar and others and would make it a point to attend the concerts of these Vainikas in Chennai without fail.

He had great admiration for Semmangudi Srinivasa Iyer's music and played many kritis as per the Semmangudi patantharam. His eldest son P. Viswanathan was in the service of All India Radio, Chennai as a guitar artiste and had also accompanied his father on the Mrudangam for many a concert. For many years Pichumani Iyer performed on the Saraswathi Pooja day at the Vaishnavi shrine in Thirumullaivaayal near Chennai.

Though confined to his bed during the last couple of years of his life, he was mentally very alert and would discuss the happenings in the Carnatic music world with those who called on him.

Shri P. Vasanth Kumar is a senior Veena Vidwan, writer and music critic based in Chennai.

Remembering my Grandfather

Flute T. S. Sankaran

Shri J. A. Jayanth



◀ J. A. Jayanth with his Guru Shri. T. S. Sankaran in one of the Sabha concerts at Chennai

I am flooded with so many memories when asked to write a tribute to my granddad flute maestro Late T. S. Sankaran. He was both a man and a musician who possessed rare human qualities and a large heart. I feel very tiny indeed to describe him and his music. We shared a unique bond with an unconditional love for each other. People knowing us at close quarters are aware

and have felt the same, for he was not just my grandfather and guru, but much more than that.

My earliest memories of life are sitting on his lap, observing him teaching his students at his Mandaveli house, his concerts that I accompanied as a 3 year old and sleeping on his lap throughout the night as he would sing *Madhava Mamava* in Neelambari. I also remember his vehement discussions on vaadi-samvaadi structures in raga playing, his discussions on politics over and over again, his days with his Mali sir and his unconditional love for his guru filled with so much gratitude and respect. No wonder, Flute Mali passed on all his property and named T. S. Sankaran his legal heir. The will was later broken by granddad and the property transferred to Flute Mali's brother.

T. S. Sankaran was born to T. N. Sambasiva Iyer and Alamelu on 28th October 1930 at Sathanur (near Tanjavur). His initial training was under his father who was a court musician at The Mysore Palace in the 30's and later on became the AsthanaVidwan of Thiruvaavaduthurai Adheenam, to where he belonged. His maternal forefather was Sathanur Panchanatha Iyer, who is believed to have propagated Muthuswamy Dikshitar's kritis to a lot of great musicians, one of them being Veena Dhanammal.

Thatha, as I would call him, went on to become one of Mali's prime disciples since the mid-40's. His association with his guru lasted for over 4 decades and Flute Mali's last days were spent in the good hands of Late T. S. Sankaran. Something that is worth a mention here : In an interview with Poet Vali, Flute Mali had addressed T. S. Sankaran as his "Ekalavya" - having perfected his style exactly on the flute.

I am reminded of his reluctance to teach me the flute early on, calling me the reincarnation of Mali sir and placing my legs on his head. He had the same love for all his students who would put him on a different pedestal. His beaming smile as I would play a fast phrase in a concert, his detailing of Raga Bhairavi and Kambhoji which was chaste and would remain his on the flute are unforgettable. The nadai variations in Mohanam varnam, his body language while playing the flute and his gayaki way of playing the kritis with poise and control on the flute stand apart.

He mastered ragas like Kalanidhi, Natakapriya, Kokilapriya, Bhairavi, Kambhoji, Ramapriya, Kalyani, Huseni, Aboghi, Harikambhoji, Ranjani, Ahiri, Jingala, Poorvi-kalyani etc on the flute like never before. His blowing technique and fingering technique was influenced by T. N. Rajarathnam Pillai (contemporary of my great grandfather T. N. Sambasiva Iyer). He would tell me stories of how he would listen to TNR keeping awake so many nights. In this process he developed a style of his own which is admirable and deserves more credit. He had a clear understanding of the instrument and was strong with his alignment with the pitch and clarity in producing the notes with "thuthukaarams" and "akaarams" at the appropriate places.

The dedication he had towards his art and teaching was commendable. He treated all his students the sameway and often gave them more importance and time, than me. I don't think any of us would

have the big heart to do so. His love for me was unconditional. Every time I asked him about how long he would live for me, he would tell me "One has to face death one day, but I will always be with you". I feel his presence around me and that makes me deny the fact that he is no more. He would come for all my concerts and keep talam with so much pride as in the last concert of mine that he attended for charsur@ngs on 11th July 2014. He would unexpectedly ask me to play the epic *Chinna Nadena* in Kalanidhi and Sindhu Bhairavi tillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman sir in almost every other concert of mine.

He never taught and imposed his style on me or any other disciple of his thus re-iterating the fact that he believed music is above musicians.

He was an epitome of love and simplicity. He earned love from whoever he came in touch with through his humility. His love for his guru Flute Mali and me knew no bounds! May be he is happily filling the heavens with his beautiful music at the moment!

I am currently compiling his hand-written notations that will soon get published and released this December!

Shri J. A. Jayanth is one of the most promising flautists in Carnatic Music. He is the grandson and disciple of Shri T. S. Sankaran, residing in Chennai.



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To Teacher, with gratitude

Smt. Jyothi Mohan



◀ Smt. G. Karunambal

On International Dance Day, the dance world was left poorer by the passing on of Guru Smt. Karunambal, the co-founder and architect of the renowned Sri Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir of Mumbai. She was 92. Guru Smt. Karunambal, the only daughter of Bharata Vidwan Kuppiyah Pillai, was married to Guru A. T. Govindraj Pillai and proved to be a great source of inspiration to him. With his mentor's blessings, Guru A. T. Govindraj Pillai and Smt. Karunambal took the giant step of leaving Tamil Nadu and making Mumbai their new home. With the sole intention of spreading the knowledge of dance and music which they had inherited, they set up a class in Chetna Art Gallery in south Bombay in the year 1945. Very soon, several students joined them and they moved to the present premises in Matunga. Thus, the

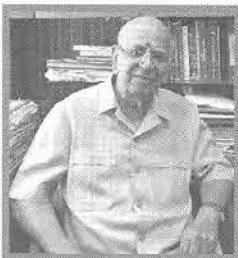
Rajarajeswari Bharata Natya Kala Mandir was established in 1951 fulfilling the long-felt need for a traditional dance institution teaching the pristine and beautiful Thanjavur bani. Smt. Karunambal reminisced that most students knew no Tamil and they themselves knew no other language. Yet, they managed with gestures and a few phrases and were greatly loved and respected as they treated their shishyas like family.

It is this warm hospitality that students the world over recalled when the news reached them of her passing away. She was a task master, setting high goals for her shishyas and yet after class took care of their emotional needs and fed them well before sending them on their way. Students reminisced that she would do the padams with the subtlest of abhinaya with great conviction. She would patiently explain the meaning of the lyrics and coax the shishya to give of her best. She would enthusiastically narrate incidents from the past with great humour and had child-like enthusiasm to hear all that was happening in the dance world. She would attend all arangetrams and programmes she was invited to, without fail and offer an honest and encouraging feedback on the performance. Shishyas looked forward to her suggestions and guidance. Later, when she was not able to honour invitations, she would ensure some member of the family did and hear about the performance from them.

Humble and loving till the very end, she was a pillar of strength to the Rajarajeswari family and score of shishyas all over the world who are ever indebted to her. She remains a stirring inspiration for women in the arts and especially arts education. We shall miss her smiling face but feel secure in the thought that she continues to watch over us and bless us.

Smt Jyothi Mohan is a Bharatanatyam guru and faculty member of the Vidyalyaya.

OBITUARY



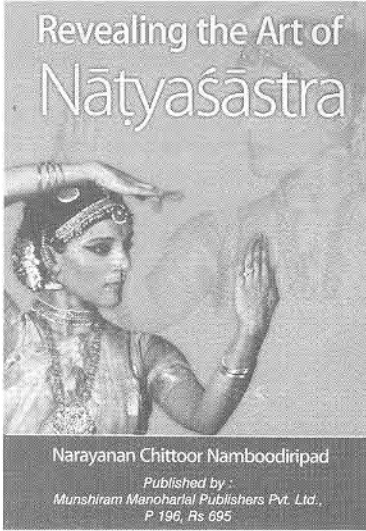
◀ Mr. S. Srinivasan

Mr. S. Srinivasan, Senior Partner of M/s V. Sankar Aiyar & Co, Chartered Accountants, the statutory auditors and tax advisors of the Sabha for over 4 decades, passed away in Mumbai on April 30, 2015, at the age of 87.

His unassuming and self-effacing personality, which often found a place in the main hall of the Sabha, either enjoying a music concert or a play, will be ever missed by this August body.

Book Review

Shri A. Seshan



Revealing the Art of Nāṭyaśāstra, Narayanan Chittoor Namboodiripad, Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., P 196, Rs 695

This is one of those commentaries on Bharata's *Nāṭyaśāstra* (NS) that have appeared in the recent years to make the classic understandable not only to the practitioners of the art but also to the interested public. The contents can best be summarized by what the blurb says: "The book unveils the secret world of Indian classical theatre - the fundamental principles of sublime grace, stage presence, and effective communication of emotions. It analyzes the concepts of Centripetal Effect, Centre Point, and the Introspective Illusion that influence the presentation of plays. It also analyzes the secret of grace. Bharata Muni has given an unbelievably detailed study of the facial muscles and head movements. He orders what to do but not why. The first chapter gives the rationale behind every *śloka* dealing with this.

The second chapter (Acting with the Face) and the third chapter (Acting with the Body) - both analyze the logic of using various parts of the body to create bhava. This book is unique since it studies the unrevealed secret of dramaturgy; no other work has ever attempted such a logical study of grace and bhava." The reviewer is in agreement with the contents indicated above but cannot vouchsafe the last statement because although he has read a lot on NS he cannot claim that he has covered all the literature on the subject.

A few critical comments are in order by way of a review. In the first place, the author's extensive scholarship is evident from the way he has marshalled facts from various technical sources to support his remarks and interpretation of the classic. The rationale for various movements is well done. Referring to the sensuous (Shringara) rasa he points out its two dimensions, viz., the erotic and the pining of the heroine for the hero (Viraha) or union with the Lord. Philosophers assert that renunciation alone leads to bliss. The author refers to the paradox of a seemingly sensuous scene transcending the carnal aspects to become sublime devotion. I would like to say that Shringara has come to be narrowly identified with the erotic relationship. In reality it has become trifurcated – Rati, Bhakti and Vatsalya. Rati refers to the nayaka-nayika relationship, Bhakti to the dancer's devotion to god and Vatsalya to a mother's love for the child. Vyasa Raya's *Krishna Nee Begane* in Yamunakalyani is an example of a song that combines all the three unlike others that deal with only one of the other two.

There is a good discussion on the composed rasa of Bharata that is the equivalent of Shanta rasa and the author points out the confusion in NS arising from the reference to eight rasas and then the composed rasa. He asks whether Bharata added the composed rasa later. It may be noted that NS was discovered in the 19th century. "Bharata" was a common name given to actors in the distant past and, according to some experts, many Bharatas had made their own contributions to NS over the centuries. There is also a discussion of Sridharacharya's tenth rasa, viz., devotion. The general view is that Shanta rasa crept into Indian classical dance around the 7th century AD due to the influence of Buddhism. Buddhist dramatists found a need for Buddha's standard state of meditation as representing peace or Shanta. As for the tenth rasa referred to above, there is no need for it if one of

the triple dimensions of Shringara is based on bhakti as mentioned above. While his discussion of bhava and rasa is well done, I wish, for the sake of completion of the discussion, there is a table on their equivalents – shoka (stayibhava)/ karuna (rasa), vismaya/ adbhuta, etc.

The author refers to the colours for characters – black for the bad, green for the good and so on. Bharata has prescribed colours for rasas also in Chapter 6 of *NS* – white for hasya, red for raudra and so on. On hairstyle in Mohiniattam the author remarks: “Maybe experts have to study the costume of the Mohiniyattam dancer in greater detail as we do have a few features of doubtful validity. One example is the hairstyle: putting it up on one side of the head is supposed to have its basis in Kerala culture but it tends to reduce the artistic symmetry of the face.” The hair-do of Mohiniattam was inspired by the way the queen's hair-do was represented in Ravi Varma paintings and Kerala Kalamandalam adopted it.

With his knowledge of Kerala dances the author could have devoted some pages on the relative section on Kerala dances to discussing why hastamudras therein are based on *Hastalakshanadeepika* of unknown authorship and not *NS*, which is the basic reference work for all other Indian classical dances. Another omission is Sopanam. It is a unique system of classical music that accompanies some of the Kerala dances. It is based on Carnatic music and uses its ragas with the exception of a few like Samanthamalahari. It uses plain notes without gamakas, avoids microtones and follows the time theory. While there is akara-based alapana there are no swaraprastaras or niravals.

In an otherwise well-edited and produced book there are a few lapses. “Losing” is uniformly spelt as “loosing” (pages 96, 97, 105, 120 and 142 to give a few examples.) In the reference to the originators of Margam in Bharatanatyam (Tanjore Quartet) there are spelling mistakes: Chinnappa and Ponnappa (page 188) instead of Chinnayya and Ponniah.

Munshiram Manoharlal Publishers Pvt. Ltd., have been rendering a laudable service in the promotion of Indian classical music and dance by publishing books on the subjects even though the readership may be limited. I would recommend the book to libraries and aficionados of Indian classical dance.

Shri A. Seshan, an Economic Consultant in Mumbai, writes on music and dance.

Tukkada 9

Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya¹

1. Who is the vaggeyakara who had the unique distinction of studying under all the masters of the Carnatic Music Trinity?
2. In Carnatic Music Mayamalavagowlai is the first raga taught. What is it in Hindustani Music?
3. What is the raga one gets if rishabha is dropped from Malayamarutam?
4. Which is the song where Tyagaraja sings about the virtues of Ramrajya?
5. What was the occasion for Tyagaraja to sing "Nidhichala sukhamam"?
6. Tyagaraja has his Pancharatna kritis. What are the compositions covered by the title "Ratnatraya"?
7. Who is credited with the discovery of Karnaranjani?
8. Who prefixed the name of Vaidyanatha Iyer with "Maha"?
9. Who was the guru of Papanasam Sivan?
10. On February 14, 1974 two eminent Hindustani musicians died one after the other. Who were they?
11. What is chromatic scale?
12. What is double stopping?
13. Who is generally credited with the introduction of statuesque poses in tillana?
14. Who were the equivalent of Devadasis of Bharatanatyam in Odissi?
15. Who is the Spanish-born American, a student of Kattumannarkoil Muthukumaran Pillai, who became a famous Bharatanatyam dancer?

¹The objective of the column is not only to test the knowledge of the readers but also to supplement it. They are welcome to send dissenting letters with supporting evidence, if they do not agree with the answers on page 45. It is important for keeping the record straight.

ReaderSpeak

The 'Shanmukha' issue of January to March 2015 is well produced and carries Ruby Jubilee reportage on the Shanmukhananda Medical Centre and tributes to the Shanmukhananda Eminence awardee, the departed maestro Nedunuri Krishnamurthy. Congrats for the good production.

N. Hariharan

Ex-Asst. Editor, The Times of India, Bombay

Accredited Correspondent, Asia Today International (Sydney, Australia)

I want to express my congratulations for bringing out this issue covering with excellent articles on the late Nedunurigaru. It is an issue to be treasured. Thanks to all involved in bringing out this issue.

V. Ramachandran

9820143536 (Life Member of Shanmukhananda)

President, Music Triangle

Thank you for sending me a copy of Jan - March 2015 issue containing my contribution on Page 43.

I read with interest several other articles about 'Sangeeta Kalanidhi Nedunuri' describing his versatile talent. I wish you to send a copy of this issue to an admirer in Vijayawada. I read other papers in Part I on Music. Internet shows nearly 2000 papers on the influence of music in medicine.

Dr. P. S. R. K. Haranath

Retired Director of Medical Education A.P.

WRITE TO US!

We would love to get to know you, dear reader, and hear your views, suggestions and thoughts on the journal or any topic related to the performing arts.

Please email us at : bhamusic22@gmail.com

OR

write in to us at : Plot No. 292, Comrade Harbanslal Marg, sion (E),

Mumbai - 400 022 • Tel. : 022 - 2401 3207

Sabha Roundup

Report

Violin Duet by Lalgudi Shri G.J.R. Krishnan & Lalgudi Smt. Vijayalakshmi 11th April 2015

Smt. Jyothi Mohan



(I to r) Patri Satishkumar (Mrudangam), Lalgudi Shri G. J. R. Krishnan (Violin), Lalgudi Smt. Vijayalakshmi (Violin), V. Suresh (Ghatam)

A violin duet concert of Lalgudi Shri G. J. R. Krishnan and Lalgudi Vijayalakshmi took place at the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha on 11th April 2015 in the main hall. They were accompanied on the mrudangam by Patri Satishkumar and on the ghatam by V. Suresh.

They commenced with their father's Nalinakanthi varnam. The excellent rendering was a reflection of the illustrious Lalgudi bani. *Brova samayamide* of Garbhapurivasar in Gowrimanohari was taken up next. The infinite variety of one avaratana swaras with different poruthams was impressive. Vijayalakshmi played a brief alapana of Vasantha followed by *Hariharaputhram* of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, to excellent percussion accompaniment. The kalpana swarams for the pallavi were played in two speeds. A very melodious alapana of Kapi by Krishnan was followed by Tyagaraja's *Anyayamu seyakura* in adi talam. Vijayalakshmi took up Todi for elaboration with the unmistakable touch of their illustrious bani. *Ninnuvina sukhamugana* that was played was evocative with sahitya bhava oozing out in every phrase. A brisk *Neekelana* in Devamanohari, a composition of Poochi Srinivasa Iyengar came next. An excellent delineation of Kalyani by Krishnan led to the rarely-heard Tyagaraja kriti *Enduko nee manasu*. The tani avartanam by Patri Satishkumar and V.Suresh that followed was outstanding and was deeply appreciated. The nadam of Satishkumar's mrudangam and the gentle accompaniment, never distracting the main artistes, embellished the recital. The Ragam Tanam Pallavi in Bindumalini was engrossing. The alapana was played by them in turns with the delicate nuances of the raga brought out with great finesse. The Pallavi, *Sagari kripakari nada bindu malini kanindarul karuna* was in khanda nadai set to khanda jati jhampa talam, with the edam 2 counts from samam. Ragamalika in their inimitable style included a chaste Begada by Krishnan, a sonorous Reetigowla by Viji, and a heavy Saveri by Krishnan followed by a plaintive Sivaranjani by Viji. The reverse order was played by Krishnan. The continuous flow of sheer melody through their mastery of playing technique, creative imagination and great felicity made it indeed very enjoyable. They concluded the concert with a lilting tillana of Lalgudi Jayaraman in Karnaranjani. It was truly an enchanting evening with sublime music.

Concert of Mathangi Sathyamoorthy 12th April 2015

Smt. Nalini Dinesh



(I to r) Dr. Babu (Mrudangam), Manjoor Unnikrishnan (Ghatam) Mathangi Sathyamoorthy (Vocal), Tiruvizha Viju S. Anand (Violin)

The concert began with Kambhoji Ata tala varnam *Sarasijanabha* and GNB's kriti in Naattai *Karimukha Varada* with kalpanaswaras at pallavi. Latangi alapana and Patnam Subramanya Iyer's *Marivere* were sung with

neraval at "Dharalona nee sathi". Mohanam alapana was elaborate with a good response from violinist Viju S. Anand. The kriti rendered was Muthuswamy Dikshitar's *Kadambari Priyayai* with kalpana swaras at pallavi. A racy *Niravadhi Sukhada* was followed by the main raga alapana Kharaharapriya which featured characteristic phrases. Some of the syllables used by the vocalist during alapana, such as "ra", "ri" and "rom" reduced the overall appeal of the alapana. After a tanam accompanied by mridangam, a pallavi in Khanda Triputa talam was sung with sahitya "Maal marugane Murugane Guhane Umayal magane arul thiru". After a neat trikalam and tisram, ragamalika kalpana swaras were sung at Maal and Guhane. The ragas used were Hindolam, Kedaragowla and Revati. After RTP, tani avartanam was played well by Dr. Babu on the mridangam and Manjoor Unnikrishnan on the ghatam. The second half featured *Theeratha vilayattu pillai*, Swati Tirunal's *Krishna Chandra Radha*, the popular English note made famous by Madurai Mani Iyer, Bilahari tillana and an extract from Poonthanam's Gnanappana *Kandu kandangirikkum janangale*.

The concert was enjoyable, except for the sahitya enunciation which left a lot to be desired, in all the languages that Mathangi sang in.

Mandolin Concert by Mandolin Shri U. Rajesh 9th May 2015

Smt. Jyothi Mohan



(l to r) Madrimangalam Swaminathan (Mrudangam), S. V. Ramani (Ghatam), Mandolin U. Rajesh (Mandolin), S. D. Sridhar (Violin)

Mandolin U. Rajesh performed for the Shanmukhananda Fine Arts and Sangeetha Sabha on May 9th at the main hall. He was accompanied by S. D. Sridhar on the violin, Madrimangalam Swaminathan on the mrudangam and

S.V. Ramani on the ghatam.

The popular kriti of Dikshitar, *Vatapi Ganapathim bhaje* in Hamsadhvani set the tone for the kutcheri. Extensive swaras which drew applause, marked the rendering. Tyagaraja's Pancharatna kriti *Jagadanandakaraka*, in Nattai, followed. An evocative alapana of Bindumalini led to Tyagaraja's *Enta muddo*. Swaras for Pallavi were played. Nagaswaravali alapana by Rajesh as well as Sridhar was pleasing to the ear. Tyagaraja's *Garuda gamana* had very fast-paced kalpana swarams. A very appealing raga sketch of Rajesh in Ganamurthy was followed by *Ganamurthe* of Tyagaraja. A detailed alapana of Kharaharapriya was followed by an equally good alapana by the violinist. Shri U. Rajesh's disciple, Shri Balaji also played a brief alapana. *Chakkani Raja* was played in all its grandeur with interesting kalpana swarams at "kantiki Sundara". The percussion accompaniment for the kriti was excellent followed by tani avartanam which was very good. A kapi alapana was followed by Bharatiyar's *Chinnanchiru kiliye*. *Venkatachala nilayam* of Purandaradasa in Sindhubhairavi, *Alai payudhe* of Oothukadu in Kanada and a Sai bhajan in Vakulabharanam brought to an end the delightful mandolin kutcheri of U. Rajesh.

Manohara Muralidhara – Dance Ballet by Sabha's Dance School Students 10th May 2015

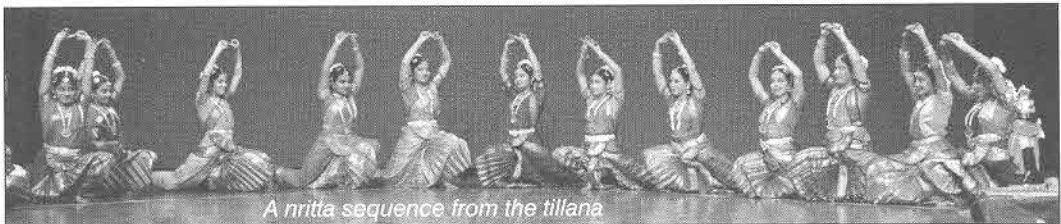


The dance school of the Sri Shanmukhananda Bharatiya Sangeetha Vidyalaya under the leadership of Smt. Jyothi Mohan, presented Manohara Murlidhara on Sunday, 10th May, 2015 at Sri Shanmukhananda Chandrasekarendra Saraswathi auditorium. 51 dancers participated in this grand production which presented Krishna as envisaged by composers in different languages through the margam. The opening



Pranamyra Rajeevan as the little Krishna jumping for the pot of butter

Pushpanjali in praise of Manohara Muralidhara in raga Varamu, the varnam in Amritavarshini and Tillana in Bahudari were compositions of Jyothi Mohan. Excellent group choreography of 18 dancers in various beautiful formations, executing classical jathis was lauded by the packed audience. The poignant Kanakadasa Devaranama and Meera Bhajan had many, including the orchestra members, in tears. Little Pranamyra Rajeevan and Nupur Pai, who teaches at the Vidyalaya stood out in all that they presented. Viji Vijayson in the Narasimha Avatara and Rajat as Krishna in the Viswaroopam were commendable. The tiny tots with perfect synchronisation and bold stage presence stole the hearts of the audience. The vadya vrindam led by Jyothi Mohan on the nattuvangam, had N.N. Sivaprasad singing his mellifluous best, S. Shankaranarayanan on mridangam embellishing the nritta and

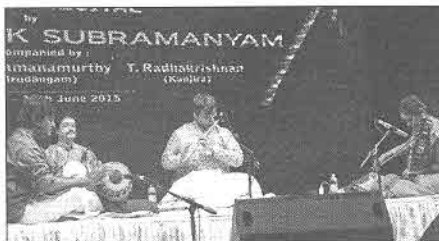


A nritta sequence from the tillana

abhinaya passages with effect, Mangala Vaidyanathan on violin and Hema Balasubramanian on flute taking turns at evocative neraval during sancharis and adding colour to the performance, was also highly appreciated. Beautiful make-up by Kedar Otavanekar and party and excellent light and sound by the Sabha technicians also deserve mention.

Concert of Shashank Subramanyam 13th June 2015

Smt. Nalini Dinesh



(l to r) V. V. Ramanamurthy (Mrudangam), Tripunitura Radhakrishnan (Ghatam), Shashank Subramanyam (Flute), Akkarai Subhalakshmi (Violin)

As Shashank started his concert with a mellifluous Kaanada alapana and the Ata tala varnam with amazing speed control, one was struck at the completely different ambience created by an instrumental concert when compared to a vocal concert. This is pure music with not even words to “disturb” the melody. Admittedly, this writer would be the first to groan whenever an instrumental concert is announced on radio or TV or even when reading a sabha's programme list, but when one actually sits down to listen to a good instrumental artiste, all reservations melt in the face of such pure melody.

A Nattai alapana having decided shades of Chalanata because of Shashank's pmG phrase with the elongated gandharam instead of the quintessential pmgmR,,s with *Jaya jaya Janakikantha* followed with kalpana swaras and an elaborate kuraippu at panchamam. All the kalpana swaras that Shashank played that evening were elaborate with beautiful korvais, interesting gati variations and attractive combinations of swaras. *Evarani* (Devamritavarshini) was followed by an excellent Saramati alapana by Shashank as well as Akkarai Subhalakshmi. *Mokshamu galada* was played with kalpana swaras at pallavi.

Shashank played a reposeful Kalyani alapana in the RTP suite. In the tanam (as in the rest of the concert too), Shashank used a variety of blowing techniques with different sound effects and super-fast alternation between base and upper octaves. The pallavi was "Guruguhanaai Muruganai Haranai Shanmukhanai..." set to Khanda Triputa talam. After trikalam and tisram Shashank played swaras in the ragas Saveri, Hemavati, Nasikabhushani, Mayamalavagowla, Sriranjani, Malayamarutham, Poorvikalyani, Dhaturvardhani, Abheri and Mohanam. The quicksilver changes in raga at a mind-boggling speed wowed the listeners. A puzzling thing about the pallavi though was, the uttarangam was announced to be in "tisram" and it was indeed played so initially, but during neraval it was played in chaturam. One also felt that Shashank could have made way for the thani avartanam by V.V. Ramanamurthy and Tripunithura Radhakrishnan (which was quite delectable) much earlier in the concert. *Baro Krishnaiyya*, *Vishweshwar* and *Raghuvamsha Sudha* brought the concert to close.

Akkarai Subhalakshmi's sensitive and perceptive violin support was an aural treat.

Vocal Duet by Malladi Brothers Shri Sriram Prasad & Shri Ravi Kumar 14th June 2015

Smt. Jayashri Suresh



(l to r) Tumkur V. Ravishankar (Mrudangam), Tumkur V. Shashishankar (Ghatam), Malladi Brothers Shri Sriram Prasad & Shri Ravi Kumar (Vocal), Charulatha Ramanujam (Violin)

The Sabha had a concert of the very popular Malladi brothers, Shri. Sriram Prasad and Shri. Ravi Kumar on Sunday, 14th June 2015. They were accompanied on the violin by Smt. Charulatha Ramanujam, on the mrudangam by Tumkur Shri. V. Ravishankar and on the ghatam by Tumkur Shri. V. Shashishankar.

The duo commenced with a never before heard shloka, *Brahme Brahmasutauchavaggeyakaram bhaje* that paid homage to all the gurus right from Matanga, Venkatamakhi and Sarangadeva till the Trinity in Hamsadhvani ragam. The duo usually begin their concerts with an Annamacharya kriti and this concert too began with this trademark. The Annamacharya kriti *Vandeham Jagat Vallabham* in the same raga set to Khanda Chapu talam was sung with crisp kalpana swarams for pallavi which set the mood for the concert. Next came Tyagaraja's composition, *Maampaala velasi* in Asaveri ragam set to Adi talam which was sung with a lot of bhava. As the artistes hail from Andhra, the enunciation of the Telugu words was very distinct and this enhanced the sweetness and aesthetic appeal of the kriti. What followed was a rich and pleasing Anandabhairavi raga alapana where all the special 'pidippus' of Anandabhairavi were showcased. The duo have been blessed with a gamaka infused voice and therefore the raga alapana sounded grand and majestic. The violin thani by Charulatha was soothing with graceful strokes and soulful phrases and was a textbook chapter of how Anandabhairavi has to be rendered on the violin!!! They took up one of the Tiruvarur Panchalinga kritis of Muthuswamy Dikshitar, *Anandeshwarena Samrakshitoham* set to Misra Chapu

talam and sang kalpana swarams for pallavi with excellent kuraippu at 'pa' with interesting patterns and korvai. As this kriti is not heard often, you could see people rear up from their seats to pay close attention to the word weaving magic of Dikshitar!! They sang a fast paced kriti which was Tyagaraja's *Manasu nilpa shakti* in Abhogi ragam set to Adi talam which was a break after the heavy Anandabhairavi. This was followed by an outstanding Panthuvrali raga alapana filled with rich gamakas and deft pattern weaving around daivatam, nishadam and tarasthayi rishabham. The violin thani that followed this deserves a special 'bow'! Charulatha makes violin playing seem effortless; such is her felicity and talent! She held the audience captive with her Panthuvrali and the ragam stood out in all its glory under her nimble playing. The kriti chosen to sing after this was somewhat of a denouement as one was expecting a more heavy piece after such a detailed raga alapana. They sang Tyagaraja's *Naradamuni* set to Rupaka talam with surprisingly short neraval and kalpana swarams at "*Narayana namamulanu*". This was followed by a piece in Mukhari, *Kannaara kandaney kadirvelanai* set to Adi talam. At this juncture, Shri Amarnath Sury came on stage and spoke about the current issue of 'Shanmukha' magazine which was a tribute to the legendary Nedunuri Krishnamurthy. He made a special mention about how the articles in the magazine had been thoroughly researched and threw light on various aspects of the artiste. Since the duo were students of Nedunuri Krishnamurthy and had also contributed a homage piece on the legend in the issue, he then called Smt.Radha Namboodiri, the Editor of "Shanmukha" and the Principal of the Sangeetha Vidyalaya to come on stage and present a copy to the duo. After this, when they began the Shankarabharanam raga sketch, everyone assumed it would be the main piece. But they limited themselves to an extremely brief sketch and chose Tyagaraja's magnum opus kriti, *Enduku Peddala* where surprisingly only the kriti was rendered. When you hear a kriti of that stature being sung, it feels somewhat bereft and incomplete when neraval and swarams are not sung. Wish we had heard more of Shankarabharanam in their sublime voices!! This was followed by a soulful, well defined and well delineated Dhanyasi raga alapana with a lot of grandeur and was followed with an ideally sung tanam with crisp and perfect syllables. Once again Charulatha brought the roof down with her solid yet sensitive and deft exploration of Dhanyasi and her rendition added more lustre and luminosity to the pallavi that followed. The words of the pallavi were as follows: *Jaya jaya mahesha dayite shri kamakshi, chidaakaasha koumudi vihaare* and it was set to Adi talam in khanda nadai. The pallavi with eduppu that was two counts from samam unfolded in a grand manner. The trikalam for the pallavi was neatly executed and following ragas were sung in the ragamalika: Poorvikalyani, Keeravani (with shades of kalyana vasantham) Kannada, Kaanada and Valaji. This was followed by a brisk and energetic thani by the percussionists. One could see the joy and excitement in their visages as they could get their hands on a meaty and complex tala pattern which they explored with vigour and enthusiasm! Next came Narayana Teerthar's *Pahi pahi jagan mohana Krishna* in Kedaram set to Adi talam and was followed by Panchapakesa Shastry's *Saa pashya koushalya* in Jonpuri ragam set to Adi talam.

A Telugu viruttam in Khamas *Ramudu ghora paathaka viraamudu* was followed with the Bhadrachala Ramadas composition *Ramajyogi* in the same ragam set to Adi talam. Syama Shastry made an appearance in the Sriragam composition *Karunajuda* set to Adi talam. Next came a Tyagaraja composition *Haridasudu vedale* in Yamuna Kalyani set to Adi talam. The concluding piece was Tyagaraja's *Pathiki hara there* in Surutti ragam set to Adi talam where they began with the Anupallavi at *Athi mridu* followed by the mangalam *Mangalam Kosalendraya*.

These seasoned artistes provided a musical treat for the ears for close to three and a half hours. By exploring classical and traditional ragas like Anandabhairavi, Dhanyasi, Asaveri and Pantuvrali, they provided a live music lesson to students as well as listeners. Little wonder then why our Sangita gurus keep exhorting us to listen, listen and listen more to quality music!!

Answers to Quiz on Sangeeta and Natya

1. Subbaraya Sastri. Syama Sastri was his father. His swara sahyams are modelled after his father's.
2. Bilawal (equivalent to Sankarabharanam in Carnatic Music).
3. Valaji. Muthiah Bhagavata discovered it by doing grahabhedam on the madhyamam of Abhogi.
4. "Karubaru" in Mukhari. Tyagaraja is so ecstatic in praising Ramrajya he starts on a high pitch with the gandharam of the upper octave.
5. When he declined to accept the invitation of the maharaja of Travancore to visit him.
6. The three swarajatis of Syama Sastri in Bhairavi, Todi and Yadukulakamphoji.
7. Harikesanallur Muthiah Bhagavata
8. The head of the Tiruvavaduturai Mutt.
9. Nilakanta Sivan
10. Srikrishna Narayan Ratanjankar and Amir Khan, the latter in a car accident.
11. It is a scale made up of twelve half steps in an octave (Music, Daniel T Politoske)
12. It is playing two strings at a time on a violin or other string instrument (Music, Daniel T Politoske)
13. Vazhuvoor Ramiah Pillai
14. Maharis
15. Nala Najan (Bharatanatyam, Ashish Mohan Khokar)

Scores (one mark for each correct answer)

Less than 6: Hope is eternal! Start on sarali varisai.

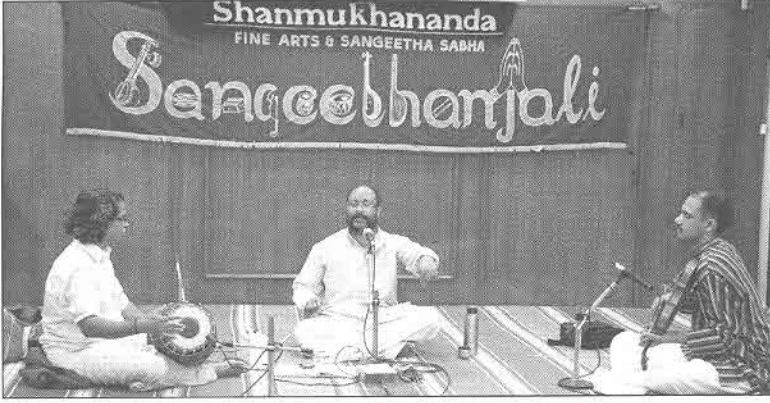
6-10: Good progress! Fit to learn varnam.

11-15: Congratulations! Proceed to Ragam, Tanam and Pallavi.

Happenings at the Vidyalyaya

Smt. Nalini Dinesh

Maharaja Swati Tirunal Day 18th April 2015



(l to r) Prasannakumar (Mrudangam), M. D. George (Vocal), S. Dinesh (Violin)

George commenced his concert with a good albeit brief sketch of Manirangu and rendered the kriti *Jaya Jaya Padmanabha* followed by a neat rendition of the Charukeshi kriti *Kripaya Paalaya* and a brisk *Paramapurusha* in Vasanta. Both these kritis were rendered with bhava. A good Hindolam alapana was sung to preface *Padmanabha Paahi*. George then rendered the popular Dhanashree tillana preparing to conclude his concert, when he was requested to render one more kriti. He chose to present *Maamava Sada Janani* in Kaanada bringing to a close a concert marked by spontaneity.



(l to r) Prasannakumar (Mrudangam), Kanakavalli Santhanam (Vocal), S. Dinesh (Violin)

Kanakavalli Santhanam took the stage next with a bright *Gopanandana* in Bhooshavali followed by the 7th day Navaratri kriti in Shuddha Saveri *Janani Paahi*. An alapana in Bhairavi was followed by a kriti not commonly heard on the concert platform *Chintayami Te*. The 8th day Navaratri kriti in Natakuranji *Pahi Janani* was sung after a brief alapana. A good rendition of *Rama Rama* in Simhendramadhyamam and the mangalam by Swati Tirunal *Bhujagashaayino* in Yadukulakambohoji concluded Kanakavalli's neat concert. Her clear voice and Sanskrit diction were appealing.

S. Dinesh supported the artistes on the violin and Prasannakumar provided good mridangam accompaniment. The programme was compered by Raksha Shankaranarayanan.



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